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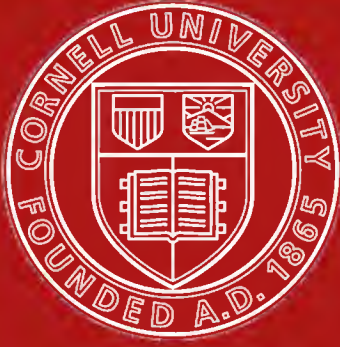


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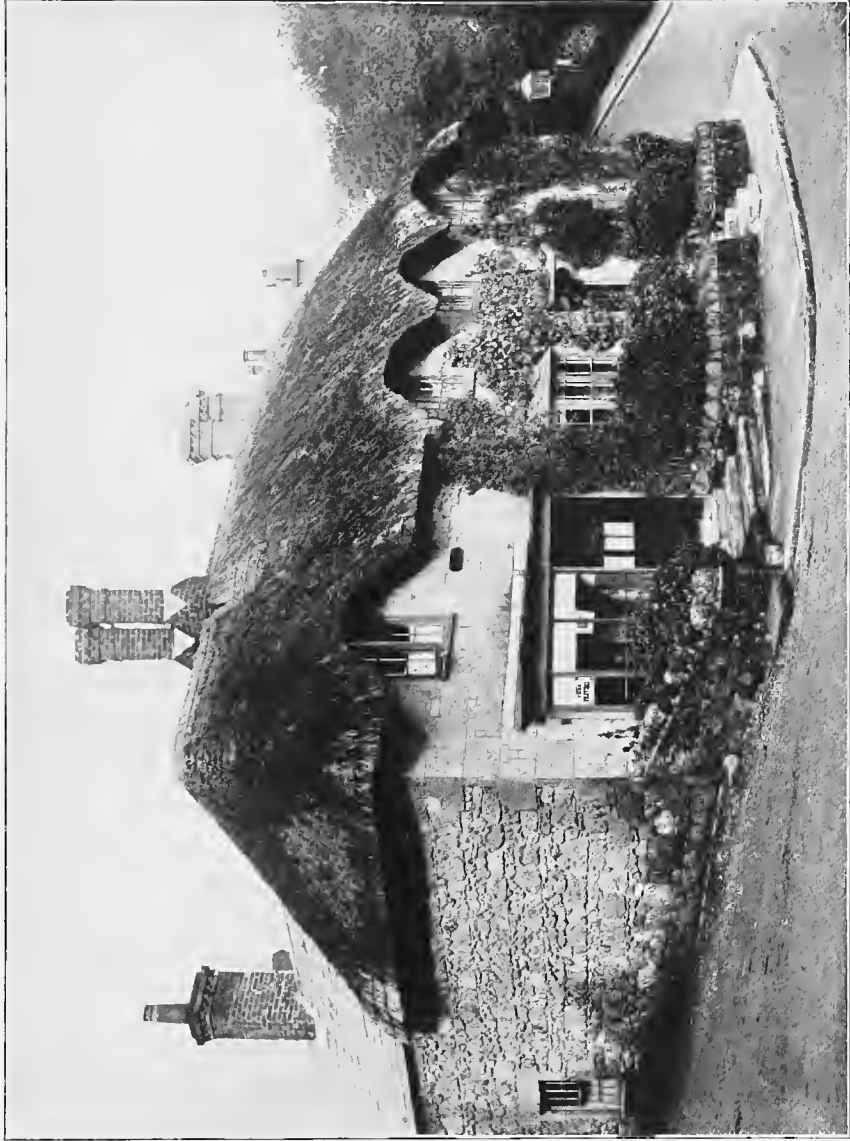


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COTTAGE NEAR SHANKLIN, ISLE OF WIGHT

PICTURESQUE
ENGLISH COTTAGES
AND THEIR
DOORWAY GARDENS

BY
P. H. DITCHFIELD, M. A., F. S. A., F. R. H. S.

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY
RALPH ADAMS CRAM



1905

**House &
Garden**

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
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Cottages at Sway, Hants

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A Cottage in the New Forest

PREFATORY NOTE

THE beauty of English cottage-building, its directness, simplicity, variety, and above all, its inevitable quality; the intimate way in which the resulting buildings allied themselves with the soil and blended with the ever-varied and exquisite landscape, the delicate harmonies almost musical in their nature, that grew from their gentle relationship with their surroundings, the modulation from man's handiwork to God's enveloping world that lay in the quiet gardening that bound one to the other without discord or dissonance,—all these things were as newly found truths to men who had unexpectedly awakened to “a new heaven and a new earth.”

For English cottages and their gardens possess an actual importance other than that which is most patent and obvious. Picturesque they are indeed, very singularly so in point of fact, and this quality gives them a notable claim on consideration in the new prizing of beauty that has slowly grown from the early days of the XIXth century when the old régime of artificiality and false standards that had held for three hundred years began to give place to a new dispensation wherein the sounder principles of the middle ages reasserted themselves.

It would be hard to exaggerate the value of these little English cottages from this aspect alone. At a time when the craft of building amongst Anglo-Saxon races had reached the nadir of its fall and the “classical” artifice, crude and crescent under Elizabeth, bold and over-blown at the hands of Wren and his school, had frittered itself away through the dying congelations of Anne and the Georges, reaching at last at the end of the XVIIIth century, a point below which there seemed no pit of further fall, the discovery of the typical English cottage was almost, in a way, like the finding of precious manuscripts preserved by the faithful monks from the wreck of the ancient world.

The revolt had come, of course, and was coincident with the culmination of falsity. It could not escape this same instinct for deception that had endured unchallenged for so long. The “Romanticists” led back to the better modes and principles prior to the reign of the Eighth Henry, but subterfuge and simulation were still accepted dogmas and “Strawberry Hill Gothic” differed only from what it supplanted in the epoch of the models it chose for its futile masque.

And the habit of architectural scene-painting still obtains, though, we may hope, decreasingly. We have not as yet succeeded in reading between the lines of mouldings and contours and arch-centering the fundamental laws that, expressing themselves through these,

PREFATORY NOTE

alone made them of value. It is still enough for us if we bring into being a plausible simulcrum of what was in earlier days, and it is just here, in the showing forth of the absolute beauty of work that was sound, genuine and instinctive, yet neither "Gothic" nor "Classic," that the study of the English cottage must teach the lesson that we are compelled to learn before we can match our forefathers in their own field.

For here we find that second element of importance in the subject matter of this book, to which I have referred above. It is an obvious fact, and one practically ignored by historians of English art, that with the extinction of instinctive art in the first quarter of the XVIth century, true tradition and right impulse by no means came to an end. Church building, the most highly developed of all forms of architecture, came indeed to an untimely termination, the field lying fallow for exactly three centuries; house building, so far as the great places were concerned, died more slowly, sound principles of proportion and composition persisting through the reigns of Mary, Elizabeth, and the early Stuarts, even though crumbling taste was causing a swiftly progressive disintegration of all sense of beauty and refinement of detail. Under Charles I. an effort was made to stem the tide, but failure followed as it did, from a material standpoint, in all the fated King attempted. Under his successors of the same House, the creeping paralysis continued and the end came swiftly, when the dark days of the XVIIIth century blotted out even the memory of a great past.

And yet during all the melancholy progress, the people, the poor and the middle classes, were building, building, quietly and simply, untroubled of any compunctions as to Gothic or Classic models, and these, the cottages and dwellings of the humblest type, maintained in all their integrity the real principles that made mediæval architecture immortal. Frank and simple and direct, built for use, not the exploiting of an empirical theory, they possess in the highest degree perfect adaptation to function, and therefore absolute beauty. We copy them now, as Sir Horace Walpole copied his ruined Abbeys, and in the same way, tacking flimsy boards on "balloon-framed" shanties in futile imitation of oaken beams and brick nogging, but by and by, if we think a little more deeply, we shall see, perhaps, that for us these cottages are really the monasteries that have preserved, until brighter days, the laws and traditions and records of a dead time when art was a living thing, and, not whimsy and copying, but eternal laws were the corner-stones of art of every kind.

Ralph Adams Cross



Laborers' Cottages at Steeple Claydon

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A Cottage near Selborne

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Cottages at Steeple Claydon



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

WE live in a world of change. Even in the sleepy hollows of rural England the pulse of life beats faster than of yore, and new times, new manners, leave their mark upon our social life. "Ther' sims to be allus summat a-fresh," murmurs an old Berkshire dame. In no way is this change more manifest than in the intrusion of modern buildings into our villages, and the destruction of the beautiful old cottages which form the most attractive feature of English rural scenery.

Already many a lovely dell and rustic paradise are disfigured by monotonous rows of hideous cottages, familiar to the denizens of overgrown towns, where workmen congregate—each house its neighbor's twin, flush with the street, and devoid of anything beyond bare utility. It is true such alien homesteads in the country have a garden, which their town brethren lack; but see the hideous, bare-faced ugliness of these products of modern civilization—the crude tints of the bare brick walls, the slate roofs, the doors and windows supplied by some cheap wood company by the thousand, each one like its neighbor; the little stunted chimney, that juts out from the roof; and contrast this with the charming old English thatched and weather-beaten dwellings, many examples

of which we hope to visit together and mark their graces and perfections.

A new law should be enacted for the suppression of such dwellings, which are as disagreeable to live in as to look at, and the punishment for the offending builder, who thus could spoil God's beautiful earth with such detestable architectural enormities, should be no less than that of being hanged from his own roof-beam. They are sore places to live in, these modern cheap cottages. The jerry-builder makes the walls so thin that the cold winds of winter seem to blow through them. The hot sun of summer remorselessly beats down upon the slate roofs, and makes the upper rooms almost unbearable; whereas a thatched roof will keep you cool in summer and warm in winter, and the old cottage walls are sturdy and strong like our rustic laborers, and can defy the keen blasts of winter. Such a cottage you will see on the road from Minehead to Porlock, with its graceful thatch and tiled porch and its background of lovely trees.

The destruction of old cottages began years ago in the days of the old poor laws, when each parish managed its own affairs, and there were no Unions and District Councils and County Councils. In order to



A HOUSE ON THE ROAD FROM MINEHEAD TO PORLOCK



MODERN COTTAGES AT LEIGH, PRESERVING THE CHARM OF ENGLISH TRADITIONS



A DOOMED COTTAGE

keep down the poor rate in a parish, the farmers and landlords used to try and diminish the number of the poor by pulling down the old cottages, and driving the laborers into the nearest town. It was a sad policy and did much mischief; and now our people are flocking to the towns, whence we would fain bring them back to the land and the fields wherein their sires worked. Happily the squires and farmers needed laborers; hence the destruction of cottages was limited. Recent years have doomed many. Some are drooping into decay, because landlords refuse to spend money in repairing them. District Councils, armed with the authority to govern our rural affairs, have passed by-laws which forbid the use of thatch on new buildings, though happily they cannot strip the old ones, and many cottages have been pulled down and replaced by the unsightly and uncomfortable enormities which I have described, or by the non-substantial, though often hideous, erections which the genius of an estate agent or builder has devised out of his inner consciousness.

How different are the old cottages of England! I see one before me as I write. It is a small house, of odd, irregular form, with various harmonious coloring, the effects of weather, time and accident, the whole environed with smiling verdure, having a contented, cheerful, inviting aspect, and a door open to receive a gossiping neighbor. Old English flowers—roses, pansies, peonies,

sweet-williams and London pride—adorn the strips of ground on each side of the path. There is a timber porch with seats on either side. There are irregular breaks in the direction of the walls, one part of which is higher than the other. There is a finely thatched roof, a yard in thickness, boldly projecting, and cut away in graceful curves over the windows of the upper rooms. The front is partly built of brick, partly weather-boarded, and partly brick-nogging, with casement windows and diamond panes. Such is a cottage which the poet and the painter loves, a type which is happily not extinct in modern England.

“Its roof with reeds and mosses covered o’er,
And honeysuckles climbing round the door;
While mantling vines along its walls are spread,
And clustering ivy decks the chimney head.”

It is set in a framework that enhances its perfections. There is in front of it a rugged common, and a rude pond whereon some ducks disport themselves, and at the back



GARDEN OF A HOUSE NEAR PORLOCK

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

wild hedgerows and an encircling wood, while near at hand the village church raises its spire heavenward and chants a *Sursum corda*.

Of such a cottage a poet sings :

“ Close in the dingle of a wood
Obscured with boughs a cottage stood ;
Sweet briar decked its lowly door,
And vines spread all the summit o'er ;
An old barn's gable end was seen
Sprinkled with Nature's mossy green.
Hard on the right, from whence the flail
Of thresher sounded down the vale—
A vale where many a flowret gay

example of an old picturesque English cottage.

But what is a cottage? If we search the dry and musty tomes of English law-books we find that, according to a statute of 4 Edward I., a cottage is a house without land attached to it; but by a later enactment (31. Elizabeth c. 7) rural dwellings were not shorn of their gardens. The object of this act was “for avoiding of the great inconveniences which are found by experience to grow by the erectinge and buyldinge of great



BETWEEN YARMOUTH AND FRESHWATER IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Sipt a clear streamlet on its way—
A vale above whose leafy shade
The village steeple shows its head.”

Such is the framework of my picture of a rural home, the peculiarly beautiful and picturesque feature in English rural scenery where dwell

“ Those calm delights that ask but little room.”

The little house that nestles amidst the forest trees of the Isle of Wight between Yarmouth and Freshwater is a good

numbers and multitude of cotages which are dayly more and more increased in mayne parts of this realm.” It orders that no one is to build, or convert buildings into cottages, without setting apart at least four acres of ground to each. It excepts from the rule towns, mines, factories and cottages for sea-faring folk, underkeepers and such like folk. We gather from this that the work of cottage building was vastly increased during the reign of “ Good Queen Bess,” and also



AN OLD HOUSE AT WOODSTOCK

that old buildings were turned into cottages, as they fell out of use, owing to the erection of new and more commodious houses. Here is a view of an old house at Woodstock, with its mullioned windows, all of which has seen better days. I would distinguish a cottage from a hovel—a small space enclosed by four mud walls and sheltering thatch—as well as from one of those absurd lodges with Corinthian pillars or Gothic windows erected on some estates in a period of debased taste. The English cottage rejects the wretched poverty of the hovel, as well as the frippery decorations of “the grand style.”

Although our theme is the story of the old cottage with its traditions and poetry, I may mention that simple rural life has its attractions for the learned and the wealthy amid the rush of social existence in the England of today. A recent writer¹ states, “an ancient cottage, though far from being a mere curiosity—surviving, indeed, only because it fulfils more or less its original purpose—is yet for most of us a beautiful anachronism, demanding for its occupants those who can live a hard, frugal, robust and

¹ In “The Studio,” March, 1901, p. 104.

leisurely life.” Modern folk who are not laborers want a small country home, a cottage, where they can write their books or paint their pictures, far from the madding crowd. Hence architects in England are very busy designing such rural retreats wherein authors and artists and composers can retire and enjoy the sights and sounds of the country, and work in peace, away from the turmoil of the town. At Leigh, Kent, there are some charming examples of modern work. It is a modern town built on very attractive lines. Some of the houses are arranged around the three sides of a square, which is usually planted with trees and shrubs and flowers. Some of these rural retreats are cleverly designed and follow the lines of our ancient dwelling-places, but are replete with modern comforts. It is true that some have so far forgot the real principles of art as to imitate the old half-timbered cottages by painting the surface of their walls with black diagonal lines so as to make them look like timbers. Others have stuck thin boards in patterns on the walls for a similar purpose. Such imitations of half-timbering work are terrible atrocities.



A MODERN COTTAGE AT LEIGH

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

But the old cottage need not generally be ashamed of its more comfortable and convenient modern copy, which serves a useful purpose and leads us modern folk back to Nature and the joys of country life. Perhaps we may induce our friendly architects to construct for us some plans of such modern cottages. If they are wise, they will in their construction follow closely the lines laid down for us by our forefathers, and take for their models some of those humbler dwelling-places to

quarries supplies fit and pleasing material for north-country houses. The painter seeks to produce a pleasing harmony of color on his canvas. The architect has a similar object in view. He will avoid with care the production of strange anomalies, and refuse to associate together those constituent parts which Nature hath not blended. Foreign elements decline to harmonize with that which Nature rears, or man, her ally, constructs in accordance with her laws and wishes.



MODERN COTTAGES SURROUNDING A QUADRANGLE AT LEIGH

which it will be our pleasure to direct them. As for materials, they will select those which Nature herself supplies in the neighborhood wherein the cottage is to be reared. It is not merely economy which preaches this doctrine. The use of local products has a great esthetic value. The half-timbered houses of our Berkshire lanes would look out of place amid the wild moors of Yorkshire, where the stone hewn from the native

From a study of the old, we learn to construct what is new. It will, therefore, be our pleasure to journey together through many highways and byways of the Old Country, and note what Time has left of the ancient homes which our forefathers reared. We shall see the cottage of the Berkshire peasant and the Cornish fisher's hut; the lovely moorland shepherd's dwelling, and the nestling hamlets nigh the village church.

Introduction

We shall strive to learn the origin of things, the why and wherefore of English rural architecture, and perhaps wonder at the men who could build for themselves such pleasing and enduring homes. These were not built by skilled architects with carefully drawn plans, but by the peasants themselves, who wrought as they best could, sweetly, naturally, unaffectedly. They learnt the secrets of their art by their commune with Nature, and from the traditions handed down from father to son from a remote past. The results of their handicraft we can see today, though we have entered upon a diminished inheritance, and have to mourn the loss of much that was beautiful, of which the restlessness of modern life has deprived us.

And as we admire the cottage homes of

England, and feel the sentiment that sheds a glamour over all, and makes us blind to the lack of sanitation and other conveniences which modern theories have taught us to deem necessities, we shall try to learn the first causes, and mark the process of development to which our houses bear witness. Man is always feeling for and striving after a more excellent way. The wondrous growth of Gothic architecture in England is the result of this human craving for perfection; and the hands that raised our mighty minsters were the same that reared our humbler homes, which by their beauty and exquisite and simple naturalness attract the wonder of all, whether we have been born amongst them, or have come wondering upon their beauties from all the grandeur over-seas.



HOUSES AT LAYCOCK



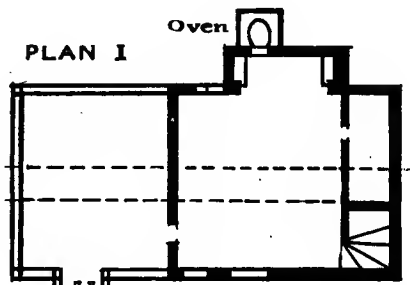
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF DORKING, SURREY

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

“HOUSES are built to live in and not to look on,” sagely remarks Lord Bacon, “therefore let Use be preferred before Uniformity, except when both may be had.” The builders of the sixteenth century houses were not unaware of this principle, and acted on it, though in seeking utility they achieved wonders in the way of beauty.

As regards the plan of a sixteenth century cottage, the simplest is an oblong, with two storeys. Subsequent additions have usually been made. The following plan is not an uncommon one.¹ The part enclosed in



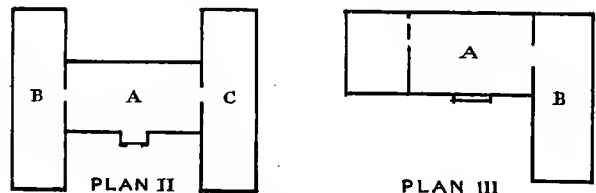
Ground Floor

PLAN OF AN OLD SURREY COTTAGE

unblackened lines is an early addition. The oven, as in most cases, is of later date than the fireplace. Cottagers probably in olden days baked their bread in the baking-ovens attached to their employers' houses; moreover, village bakers plied their trade then, as they do now. But in the sixteenth century and later the cottager determined to bake his own bread in his own oven; and thus we find many of these useful additions to his rural abode. You can see in the plan the wide chimney with seats on each side the fireplace. The modern laborer's wife wants a kitchen range, and I have known several of these old ingle-nooks bricked up and

fitted with the less snug but more convenient modern culinary appliances.

The cottage at Battle, which adjoins the famous abbey, is built in three bays. And here I would digress for one moment, and remark that old houses in all parts of England were constructed in bays. We have houses of one, two, or more bays. A bay was the standard of architectural measurement, and houses were sold and let by the bay. Thus we find in a survey of 1611 the description of a house: “One dwelling house 2 baies, 2 chambers, one barne 2 baies, one parlor with a chimney, one kytchen, one warehouse.” A bay measured roughly 16 feet, and was the length required in farm buildings for the standing of two pairs of oxen.² In the cottage at Battle there is a fine old fireplace with oven and ingle-nook. The stairs are usually straight. The older stairs were formed round a newel, and the modern form of straight stairs is a sure sign of a date later than 1600.³ Some old stairs



EARLY TYPES OF PLANS

were formed by cutting steps in a solid balk of oak.

The commonest form of house is based upon the plan of the old central hall, which has continued down to the present day with some additions and modifications. Countless large cottages and farmhouses are constructed on this plan. There is the central hall (A), and to this have been added on one

¹ “Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture in Southwest Surrey,” by Ralph Nevill, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

² “Evolution of the English House,” by S. O. Addey.

³ “Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture,” by Ralph Nevill.

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



A COTTAGE AT BATTLE, ADJOINING THE ABBEY

side the parlor (B), and on the other, kitchen and offices. The projecting wings have usually gables. Sometimes there is only one wing, and the house-plan assumes the shape of a T or L.

At Eltham, Kent, there are some cottages constructed on this plan. The old house at Keevil is a typical example of the tradition of the central hall. The cottage at Boughton - under Blean, Kent, is a remarkable example of a timber house with a central recess, indicating the position of the great hall. The way in which these timber houses were built is as follows: The foundations of the frame were constructed of stone or brick, local ragstone being extensively used in Surrey. Above this base, which

stood about a foot high, stout beams, forming a sill, were placed horizontally and large upright storey posts were erected at the angles and at intervals of from seven to ten feet. The corner posts were usually larger and stouter than the others, and in some important houses measure as much as 14 inches by 8 inches in their sections. The usual size for ordinary cottages is about 8 to 9 inches square.

The older houses have for a corner post the butt of a tree placed root upward with the top part curving diagonally outwards in order to carry the angle-posts of the upper storey. These assist greatly in supporting the weight of the upper part of the house. They are often cut into brackets both on the outside and in-



OLD COTTAGES AT ELTHAM, KENT

Methods of Construction

side of the house. Such interior decoration of these angle-posts may be seen in a house at Saffron Walden, Essex, and at the "Anchor Inn," Basingstoke. The posts themselves were also richly carved. The village of Petworth, Sussex, and the "New Inn" at Gloucester furnish examples of them.

Having constructed our main uprights, we must place horizontal timbers which make, with the former, squares of framework. All the timbers are fastened together and tenoned, the end of one being inserted into the socket or mortise of another, and secured by wooden pins. This is much better than the later practice of using iron bolts and straps. The sap of the oak often causes the iron to rust, and this produces decay in the timber and the subsequent weakening of the entire structure. The large squares are then divided by smaller timbers. The floor of the upper storey is formed by beams laid across the building, projecting some two feet in front of the framing below, and holding the framework to-

gether with the aid of other beams placed longitudinally. Sometimes the projection of the upper storey was carried round the angles of the house, and continued on all sides. The projecting ends of the joists were rounded off, or moulded, but in the early years of the sixteenth century they were covered with a long fascia board either moulded and the upper part cut into small battlements, or carved with foliage. This is always a sign of early work.

Having constructed our ground floor, we will proceed with the upper storey, which after the fashion of children making houses out of playing cards, is built up exactly in the same way: We must place the sill or foundation beams at the ends of the overhanging timbers and then fix uprights, as before, tenoning and pinning them and fastening horizontal timbers just as in the framework below.⁴

⁴ I am indebted for much information with regard to the building of timber houses to Mr. Charles Bailey's "Remarks on Timber Houses," published in the "Surrey Archæological Collections," Vol. IV., and to Mr. Dawber's introduction to W. G. Davies' "Old Cottages in Kent and Sussex."



OLD HOUSE AT KEEVIL

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



AN OLD HOUSE AT BRATTON

Some of the old streets of our towns remain, such as Canterbury, where the upper storeys of the houses project far into the street, and the inhabitants of opposite houses can almost shake hands out of the highest windows. Such houses also abound in Brittany and other parts of France. These projecting houses are not earlier than the time of Queen Elizabeth or James I. Those built before that period do not project so much.

The house in its first stage was a mere timber skeleton, and until the framing was well advanced, had to be propped and stayed from the outside. The slots cut to receive these stays can still be seen in the large timbers on the ground floor of many of the houses.

The spaces between the main uprights were filled in with win-

dows or framing, the timbers of which were generally about 8 or 9 inches apart, and nearly as much in width, the closeness of the timbering being one of the characteristics of early work; and it was not until later, when timber became more scarce, that they were set further apart, and curved and shaped braces introduced.

The divisions between the timbers were then filled in by fixing upright hazel rods in grooves cut in the top and bottom, and by then twisting thinner hazel wands hurdlewise round them. The panel was then filled up with a plaster of clay and chopped straw, and finished with a coat of lime plaster. The timbers were usually left unpainted in the southern counties, but in modern times are often painted black. In Lancashire and Cheshire they are



OLD COTTAGES
AT BOUGHTON-UNDER-
BLEAN, KENT

Methods of Construction

always blackened, and there we find elaborate patterns in the panels with diapering and cusping. The curved braces were cut out of crooked boughs and limbs of trees, and sometimes straight struts are used.

Thus our old timber-framed houses were constructed, which add such beauty to our English landscape and form such a characteristic feature of our scenery. They are the eloquent though silent witnesses to the skill and craftsmanship of our village ances-

buildings.⁵ There is a cottage at Lyme Regis where this arrangement is seen, and in Kent there are numerous instances of this pleasing variety. The gray oak and the red brick harmonize well together. Flint and stones in checkered squares are not uncommon in the latter county.

The appearance of our cottages has been much altered since they left the hands of the sixteenth century craftsman. One peculiarity of the oak timbers is that they often



AN OLD HOUSE AND GARDEN NEAR GUILFORD

tors. It behooves those who have the care of them to treat them with a gentle hand and tender regard, and not to sweep them away when a little judicious restoration would keep them strong and serviceable as of yore.

There are many examples of bricks being placed in the divisions between the timbers, and these bricks are sometimes arranged in herring-bone fashion, like the stones of Saxon

shrink. Hence the joints came apart, and being exposed to the weather became decayed. In consequence of this the buildings settled, and new methods had to be devised in order to make them weather-proof. The villagers therefore adopted two or three means in order to attain this end. They plastered the whole surface of the walls on the outside,

⁵ Herring-bone work was formerly considered a characteristic of Saxon architecture, but it can be seen also in Norman walls.



A ROADSIDE COTTAGE AT PULBOROUGH

or they covered them with deal boarding, or hung them with tiles. In Surrey, tile-hung houses are more common than in any other part of the country. This use of weather-tiles is not very ancient, probably not earlier than 1750, and much of this work was done in that century, or early in the nineteenth. Many of these tile-hung houses are the old sixteenth century timber-framed structures in a new shell. Weather-tiles are generally flatter and thinner than those used for roofing, and when bedded in mortar make a thoroughly weather-proof wall. The method of fastening them was to hang them on oak laths nailed to batten, bedding them in mortar. Sometimes they are nailed to boarding, but the former plan makes the work more durable, though the courses are not so regular.



A RESTORED HOUSE AT WELLSBORO, KENT

The tiles have various shapes, of which the commonest is semicircular, resembling a fish-scale. The same form with a small, square shoulder, is very generally used, but there is a great variety, and sometimes those with ornamental ends are blended with plain ones. Age imparts a very beautiful color to old tiles, and when covered with lichen they assume a charming appearance, which artists love to depict.

The making of tiles is an ancient handicraft. At one time fines were levied in the form of tiles. A curious by-law was made in 1443 in the town of Reading that no barber should open any shop or shave any man after ten of the clock at night, under a penalty of paying 300 tiles to the Guildhall as oftentimes as he be found faulty. Doubtless thatch was beginning to be superseded by tile roofs in towns, on account of the danger from fire incurred by the former. Hence the Corpora-



BY THE ROADSIDE NEAR MAIDSTONE



A BACK GARDEN

Methods of Construction

tion wisely determined to encourage the employment of a safer material. One John Bristol was fined 2,100 tiles for shaving seven persons contrary to the order. One John Bristow, in the reign of Henry VI., was fined 4,000 tiles for disobedience to the Mayor, and any person who should quarrel was ordered to pay six pounds of wax to a church in the town, and to the Guildhall 500 tiles. Sometimes these articles were very scarce. In the Paston letters we read that in 1475 "there is none to get for no money." And again: "Mas-



COTTAGE, EAST GRINSTEAD

ter Stoby begs loan or alms of tylle to roof one of his fayrest chambers which standyth half-uncovered for default of tylle." The maker of tiles, the *regulator*, was an important person in medieval times, and his name often occurs in the lists of rustic inhabitants. The mortar used in these old buildings is very strong and good. In order to strengthen the mortar used in old Sussex and Surrey houses and elsewhere, the process of "galleting" or "garreting" was adopted. The bricklayers used to decorate the rather wide or



AN OLD HOUSE AND ITS GARDEN AT BROOMHAM



AN OLD HOUSE AT SELLINGE

The flower garden separated by a stream from the kitchen garden and orchard

Methods of Construction

uneven mortar joint with small pieces of black ironstone stuck into the mortar. Sussex was once famous for its iron-work, and ironstone is found in plenty near the surface of the ground in this district. "Galleting" dates back to Jacobean times, and is not to be found in sixteenth century work.

Sussex houses are usually whitewashed and have thatched roofs, except when Horsham stone is used. This stone easily flakes into plates like thick slates, and forms large gray flat slabs on which "the weather works like a great artist in harmonies of moss lichen and stain. No roofing so combines dignity and homeliness, and no roofing except possibly thatch (which, how-

ever, is short-lived) so surely passes into the landscape."⁶ It is to be regretted that this stone is no longer used for roofing. The slabs are somewhat thick and heavy, and modern rafters are not adapted to bear their weight. If you want to have a roof of Horsham stone, you can only accomplish your purpose by pulling down an old house and carrying off the slabs. Perhaps the small Cotswold stone slabs are even more beautiful. Old Lancashire and Yorkshire cottages have heavy stone roofs which somewhat resemble those fashioned with Horsham slabs.

You will notice that the pitch of the Horsham slated roofs is unusually flat. The builders and masons of our country cottages

were cunning men, and adapted their designs to their materials. They observed that when the sides of the roof were deeply sloping the heavy stone slates strained and dragged at the pegs and laths, and fell and injured the roof. Hence they determined to make the slope less. Unfortunately the rain did not then run off well, and in order to prevent the water penetrating into the house

they were obliged to adopt additional precautions. Therefore they cemented their roofs and stopped them with mortar.

Sometimes in these southern houses we find stone mixed with brick in the construction of the walls. At Binscombe there are cottages built of rough Barge stone with

brick dressings. Elsewhere in the neighborhood of Petworth you will see brick used for the label-mouldings and strings and arches, while the walls and mullions and doorways are constructed of stone.

Very lovely are these south country cottages: peaceful, picturesque, pleasant, with their graceful gables and jutting eaves, altogether delightful. Well sang a loyal Sussex poet:

"If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold;
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

"I will hold my house in the high nook,
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men who were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me."



BRICKWORK AT WESTHOUGHTON HALL, LANCASHIRE

⁶ "Highways and Byways in Sussex," by F. Griggs.



COTTAGES AT BALDON, OXON

CHAPTER III

ROOFS AND CHIMNEYS

WHO has not sung of the glories and beauties of a thatched roof? It is sad to relate that thatching is becoming a lost art. Straw is expensive and slates are cheap. Moreover, the straw which is injured and broken by the threshing machines is very different from that which was cut by hand and robbed of its grain by the flail. What there is is scarce, since our farmers grow comparatively little corn now; as our good friends in America and elsewhere send us so much of the product of their fields, corn is

cheap, and the growing of it in England unproductive. The good thatcher, too, is hard to find. I have one in my village. He is an important person. He is an artist who can produce fine work, marvels of symmetry and neatness, and his peculiar and fantastic twisted ornaments of straw placed on the summit of his stacks, are much admired by all beholders. His art is still needed for thatching ricks, and sometimes for cottages also; but he is not so clever as his father and grandfather were in the latter accom-



A THATCHED HOUSE AT SHALFLEET, ISLE OF WIGHT



A THATCHED COTTAGE AT CASTLE COMBE

Roofs and Chimneys

plishment. He acquired his skill from his sires, and the secret of his art is carefully guarded. His work lasts well. Some farm buildings at Eyemouth, near Sandy, thatched with reed pulled by the hand, are in perfect condition. The thatch is as good now as it was thirty years ago when the present tenant came into the farm; and it has not been repaired during that time. Good reed thatch lasts from eighty to a hundred years. How

the encircling arms of a mother, it gives to the deep-planted, half-hidden dormer window in the middle of the roof, nestling lovingly within it, and by its very look inviting to peacefulness and repose. Note, too, the change of coloring in the work as time goes on; the rich sunset tint, beautiful as the locks of Ceres, when the work is just completed; the warm brown of the succeeding years; the emerald green, the symptom of advancing



AN OLD HOUSE AT BURLEY ON THE HILL

beautiful it is in its youth, maturity and decay! Notice, for instance, the exquisitely neat finish of the roof-ridge, the most critical point of the whole; the geometrical patterns formed by the spars just below, which help, by their grip, to hold it in its place for years; the faultless symmetry of the slopes, the clean-cut edges, the gentle curves of the upper windows which rise above the "plate"; and, better still, the embrace which, as with

age, when lichens and moss have begun to gather thick upon it; and "last scene of all, which ends its quiet, uneventful history, when winds and rain have done their work upon it, the rounded meandering ridges, and the sinuous deep-cut furrows, which, like the waters of a troubled sea, ruffle its once smooth surface."¹

¹ "The Old thatched Rectory and its Birds (Nineteenth Century)," by R. Bosworth Smith.

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



AN OLD THATCHED COTTAGE ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Thatched cottages are always delightfully warm in winter, and cool in summer. No cottage which is thatched, however humble it may be, can possibly be altogether ugly. In former days heather and moss were used for covering houses. In old inventories, dating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, we read of laborers being paid to get moss and heather for roofing. Reeds, turf and rushes were also used, as well as straw and stone and slate.

In early times, shingles, or square pieces of the heart of oak, one foot long by four or six inches wide, and half an inch thick, were used for roofing, but were discontinued in the fourteenth century. They required a somewhat steep slope, and are still used for the timber spires of churches. The roof of a house is its most prominent and important feature. Much ingenuity has been exercised in the construction of these roofs, and most picturesque are they in their grouping and

arrangement. You can recognize the earlier roofs by their steepness. The later, sixteenth century roof was much flatter. Another sign of early work is the long, uninterrupted sweep of the roof without dormer windows or gables, and terminated by hips. The hips are extended to cover the lean-to buildings, and at the back the main roof is continued in the same manner.

I have, in a previous chapter, alluded to the tiler's art. An old English red-tiled roof, when it has become mellowed by age, with moss and lichens growing upon it, is one of the great charms of an English landscape. Roof-tiles are larger and heavier than those used for hanging on the sides of houses, and the old ones are thicker and more unevenly burnt than modern ones. The pins for fastening them to the oak laths were made of hazel or willow. Now iron pins are used, which corrode and rot the wood, and roofs are less durable than of yore.



HIP COVERING A LEAN-TO

Roofs and Chimneys

Nor are they so picturesque, as the unevenness of the laying of the tiles in former days and their varied hues, produce a peculiar and subtle charm. There is a great variety in old ridge-tiling, but the humbler abodes usually have simple bent tiles or the plain half-round as a finish to the roof.

In a previous chapter, I have told of other materials used as a covering for our cottage homes. The old cottages at Lingfield, Surrey, and the house at Broomham, Sussex, are good examples of tiling, the gable end being especially picturesque. The cottage at Herne Bay, Kent, is an excellent specimen of weather-boarding. We will look up at the gables of an old house, and see the bargeboards that often adorn them. Even poorer houses have these, and they are elaborately carved or moulded. Coventry possesses many. Kent has also some good examples, and, in fact, all counties where timber was

once plentiful. And they add a charming effect to the houses. The style of the carving indicates their age. Thus the earliest forms reveal bargeboards with the edges cut into cusps. In the sixteenth century the boards are pierced with tracery, in the form of trefoils or quatrefoils; and in the Jacobean period the ends of the gables at the eaves have pendants, a finial adorns the ridge, and the perforated designs are more fantastic and correspond to the details of the well-known Jacobean carving. In old houses the bargeboards project about a foot from the surface of the wall. In the eighteenth century, when weather-tiling was introduced, the distances between the wall and the bargeboards was diminished, and ultimately they were placed flush with it; elaborately carved boards were discarded, and the ends of the gable moulded.

The chimney shafts are a very important feature and form one of the chief external



A COTTAGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PORLOCK



AN OLD HOUSE AT LINGFIELD, SURREY

adornments of our houses. Even in cottages and small farmhouses some of these shafts are most ingeniously and cleverly designed, and display wonderful workmanship. In the old Hall, the most common method of warming was to kindle a fire on a hearth of tiles or bricks in the center of the room, the smoke finding its way out through a hole in the roof, over which was placed a louvre. Many halls, however, had fireplaces in the side wall, as at Crosby Hall, London. As late as 1649, we find that the hall of Richmond Palace was warmed by a charcoal fire burning in the center of the room on a brick hearth, having a large lanthorn in the roof for the escape of smoke. My old college, Oriel at Oxford, has still its louvre, though it is now glazed and serves for the transmission of light rather than the emission of smoke. In houses constructed on the plan of the old hall,

there is usually a great central chimney, occupying the site of the original hearth and the open louvre. Much ingenuity is shown in the erection of the shafts, which are often lofty and charmingly arranged, showing a variety of light and shade. Where stone abounds, the chimneys are not remarkable, but in the regions of brick great achievements of the mason in fashioning curious and interesting shafts have been accomplished.

All the flues are formed in one solid block, and on this the shafts are arranged close together. The illustrations show a great variety of decoration. Plain shafts are often made most picturesque by the introduction of a number of angles in the plan and by the projection of courses of brick, where the chimney clears the roof, and at the head. Moulded bricks are often used to add to the effect. New



A TILED HOUSE AT BROOMHAM, SUSSEX

chimneys are seldom as graceful as the old ones, partly by reason of the thinness of the old bricks, which were only two inches in thickness. Another reason is the practice of the old builders in placing a wide joint of mortar between the thin bricks. The thickness of the mortar is half an inch, and this gives a most pleasing effect, which artists like Mr. Herbert Railton have not failed to depict in their charming drawings.¹

The more common form of cottage chimney is that which is placed at the end or side of a house, and is usually a large structure. Modern builders prefer to build the chimney inside the wall of the cottage, and contend, with truth, that this arrangement makes the house warmer. But our forefathers had a shrewd notion of making themselves comfortable, and built their chimneys external to the house in order

¹“Old Cottage and Domestic Architecture,” by Ralph Nevill, F. S. A.



A HOUSE IN THE VILLAGE OF LAYCOCK

to make a snug chimney-corner or ingle-nook wherein they could sit and keep warm on winter nights, while in the large space above they could smoke their bacon. Ingle-nooks are fast disappearing, as the modern housewife loves a range and an oven, instead of the old iron pot held over the fire by ingeniously designed hangers, by which it could be raised or lowered. The old farmhouse fireplace always had iron firedogs which were beautifully made, and sometimes firebacks of good design bearing the initials of the owner, or scriptural subjects. Unfortunately collectors have robbed many of our cottages of their stores of antique pots and curios. Lest any of our friends from across the water should be tempted too much by old chests and furniture that looks like Chippendale, and grandfathers' clocks “that have been in the family for generations,” it may be well to say that London dealers sometimes “salt” rural abodes with imitation wares and modern antiques, paying the cottagers a percentage on the sale to the gullible stranger. It is all very wrong! But to return to our chimneys. When you see the wide chim-



OLD COTTAGE AT PRINCES RISBOROUGH, BUCKS



A CHIMNEY-STACK IN SEEND VILLAGE

Roofs and Chimneys

ney carried up above the height of the ceiling of the ground floor, there you will find a bacon loft, and possibly see five or six sides of bacon hanging by hooks to iron ribs, being smoked. Coal fires are of no use for this purpose, and oak wood is the best. On one side of the ingle-nook is the arched entrance to the brick oven.

See the ingenious way in which the great broad chimney is made to slope and grow narrower as it reaches the apex of the roof, and is there surmounted by the shaft. There is the straight, upright base; then a steep slope sometimes covered with tiles; then another straight piece; then an arrangement of brick steps, repeated again until the chimney is ready for its shaft with its projecting courses, and finished with a comely pot, or a "bonnet" fashioned of red tiles. The same pains were often taken to adorn the head as we have noticed in regard to the central chimneys, and the effect is wonderfully fine, the means employed being natural, simple and unaffected.

In the interior of the cottage a beam runs along the top of the fireplace, stretching across the opening from which a short curtain hangs. Above this is a shelf blackened by the smoke of ages, whereon some of the



AN OLD COTTAGE AT BORDEN, KENT

cottager's treasures repose — modern nicknacks, most of them nowadays; cups bearing inscriptions: "A Present from Brighton," or "For a good girl." Coronation cups and Jubilee mugs there are in plenty. Almost every cottage has one or two of these mementos of events in our national history, and they stand in conjunction with impossible milkmaids, shepherds and shepherdesses, and dogs and cats with great staring eyes, and miniature dolls' houses, mugs and pigs of divers patterns. Collectors have stripped our cottages of many of their treasures; but it is curious how many valuable objects find their way into these humble abodes. In my village I have bought no less than three colored engravings by Bartolozzi. How they came into the possession of the villagers no man knoweth.



A WEATHER-BOARDED COT AT HERNE BAY, KENT



A GARDEN WALK AT LAYCOCK

Roofs and Chimneys

It is curious how many strange objects come to light when a sale of some farmer's goods takes place, an event, alas, too frequent in these days of agricultural depression! At a rummage sale in my neighborhood, when our good friends turn out their old cupboards and send anything they don't want, from an old hat to a broken mowing machine, and everything is sold for some good cause, you sometimes meet with real treasures. At a recent sale there

was an old broken looking-glass, the glass shattered, the frame tied up with string, looking very disconsolate and decrepit.

"What is the price of this?" asked an eager collector.

"Two shillings," falteringly said the young



A COTTAGE CHIMNEY AT LINGFIELD

say they "don't hold with cuddlin' up sic ould rubbish." But the old dames prize their treasures, and will not part with them, and the old wall shelf still occasionally preserves objects which actually make the collector's mouth water.

lady who presided over the stall.

"I will gladly buy it at that price. Perhaps you don't know it is Chippendale!" The young lady regretted that she had not named a somewhat higher figure.

Cottage homes still have some treasures, and these are often guarded by their owners with most zealous care. In vain the offer of the dealer, tendering new lamps for old ones. In vain the scornful remarks of neighbors who



Westhoughton Hall, Lancashire



A COTTAGE ENTRANCE GAY WITH ROSES



A THATCH ROOFED HOUSE NEAR FRESHWATER, ISLE OF WIGHT

CHAPTER IV

THE COTTAGE GARDEN

ENGLISH villagers are very proud of their gardens, which form such a charming feature of their rural life. Charles Dickens, in one of his finest passages, wrote: "In the culture of flowers there cannot, by their nature, be anything solitary or exclusive. The wind that blows over the cottage porch sweeps over the grounds of the nobleman, and as the rain descends on the just and on the unjust, so it communicates to all gardens, both rich and poor, an interchange of pleasure and enjoyment."

When strangers visit our shores, or when we first return from foreign travel, one of the first sights which gives pleasure and gratifies the eye, is the sight of the wayside cottages and their bright little gardens, the home of many old-fashioned flowers, the source of the cottager's supply of fruit and vegetables. These gardens combine utility with beauty.

Flowers encircle the cabbage plants and the potato crop; and although the cottager, who has a wife like unto a fruitful vine and many olive branches round about his table, is sorely tempted to increase the area of his kitchen garden and plant his "taters" and carrots in the soil once sacred to his flowers, he can scarcely harden his heart

to uproot the plants in which he takes so great a pride.

The flowers, too, find a zealous friend in the busy housewife who tends them and waters them, sometimes with the contents of her teapot (hydrangeas seem to love cold tea), and watches over them as flowers love to be watched. She finds time, in spite of the olive branches, to care for these other plants which make her garden gay and bright, and values far more the gift of some roots and cuttings than a present of money.

The walls of the cottages are usually covered with creepers. A vine is trained about the porch. A Virginia creeper soars as high as the topmost gable and chimney-stack, and in the autumn clothes the cottage with its mantle of beautiful mellow brownish-red leaves. Climbing roses are not forgotten, and many a cottage can boast of its fine



THE LITTLE GARDEN OF THE SHALFLEET POST OFFICE

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



AT NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT

Gloire de Dijon or Marechal Niel, or strong-growing crimson rambler, which fill the air with fragrance. Clematis plants of various hues are seen on many a cottage wall, and ivy, too, "that creepeth o'er ruins old," loves to cling to rustic dwelling-places, and sometimes clothes walls and thatch and chimney with its dark green leaves. The honeysuckle is a favorite plant for climbing purposes. It covers the porch and round about sheds its rich perfume.

The garden path is made of gravel. In Sussex it is paved with large flat Horsham slabs of stone. Box edgings are not uncommon, than which nothing can be more handsome or suitable. In the beautiful little garden of the Shalfleet Post Office there is a charming well-trimmed

edging of box, which surrounds the little path and the central bed, wherein stocks flourish and a carefully tended standard rose raises its beautiful head. Cottagers especially like edgings made of large loose flints or stones arranged in formal shapes with little paths between the beds, as in the views of the cottage gardens at Newport, Isle of Wight, where every advantage is taken of a little space. You will notice also the "gray-heads" in the wall of the cottage, a favorite and old-fashioned method of relieving a wall surface, much used in Berkshire. The gray-headed bricks are frequently arranged in various patterns and designs. In this little garden no attempt is made to grow vegetables. The whole space is devoted to flowers. This shows the devotion of the cottager to his flowers in spite of the needs of the olive branches. Miss Hayden records the saying of an old Berkshire dame, who said that she could gaze at them all day long, if she had no work to do. "They be sa wunnerful, an' there is sa much in 'um, when you comes to study 'um. As for hurtin' or breakin' a flower, well there, I couldn't do it; 'twud sim downright cruel."

The window garden, too, is a sight to behold. You will scarcely find a cottage that has not in the window some plants which are tended with the greatest care, and are



A ROSE GARDEN AT TOLLBURY

The Cottage Garden



THE GARDEN OF THE TOLLBURY STUD FARM

watered and washed so religiously that they flourish famously. Plants are like animals, and respond gratefully to the affectionate regard and care of their masters. The favorite flowers for window gardens are geraniums, hydrangeas, fuchsias, an occasional cactus or begonia, musk and balsam and many others which obscure the light of day and make the cottage dark, but the peasant cares not for that if he can see his flowers.

Some cottages can boast of their rose gardens, the owners of which obtain many prizes at the local flower shows. The views of the garden of the Tollbury Stud Farm show a fine and flourishing rose garden with an edging of tiles partly covered with pinks wherein the roses, chief glory of the English gardens, find a congenial home. The other view of the same garden is very picturesque, with its diminutive lawn, its pinks and larkspurs and other old-fashioned English flowers. These constitute the chief charm of

the cottage garden, and are prized by the true garden lover far higher than bedding-out plants or the ordinary annuals. Nowhere do they flourish better than in the peasant's rustic pleasure-ground. The best of these old flowers which you will see in many a cottage garden are the lilacs and laburnums, sweet williams and tall white Madonna lilies, gillyflowers and love-lies-bleeding, the larkspur and the lupin, pinks and carnations, the ever constant wallflowers, and the Canterbury Bells. The everlasting-pea is always welcome in its cottage home, and dahlias are greatly prized, not the single ones so much as the old-fashioned, tight-growing, formal kinds.

In some parts of England there is a tendency among cottagers to neglect these old-fashioned flowers and cultivate the hardy annuals. Nasturtiums and China asters and stocks flourish where once the sweet william and other herbaceous plants were regarded with delight. In our own gardens we have

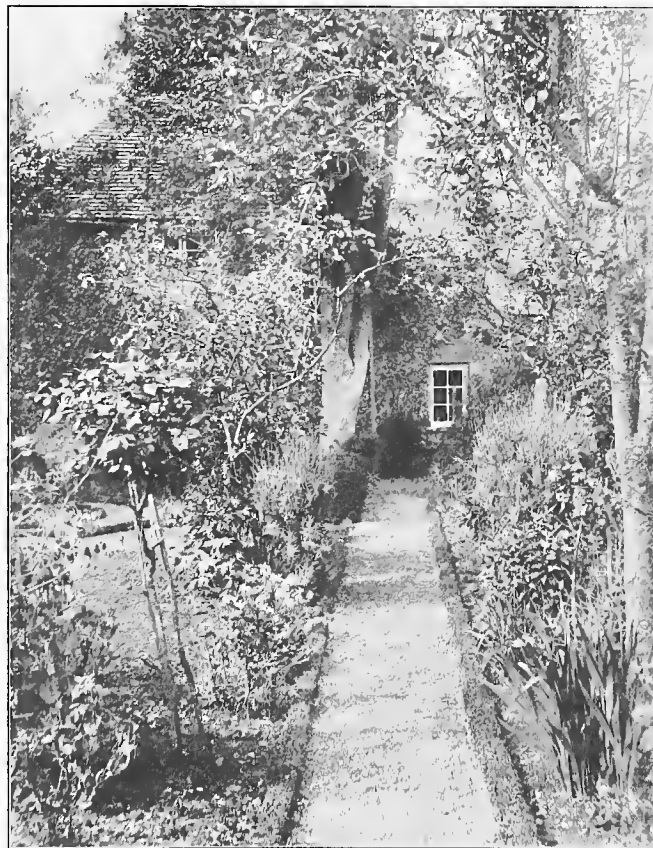
Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



A COTTAGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF DORKING

begun to appreciate our herbageous borders and to value the plants which some of our village neighbors are now discarding. We hope that they will return to their first love, and cherish again the old flowers which are the true glory of a rustic garden.

In the outskirts of Dorking there is a beautiful cottage garden. A small stream separates it from the road, along which Romans marched, and the pilgrims wended their way to the Shrine of St. Thomas at Can-



A GARDEN WALK, SHALFLEET

terbury. In the front of the house, which is a half-timbered structure, with a beautiful tiled roof and tile-covered porch and a graceful clustered chimney-stack, is the flower garden, while behind it the useful vegetables grow. We give two views of this fine Dorking garden, enclosed by a simple paling fence, its box-edged garden path, and its wealth of luxuriant shrubs and flowers and creeping plants. The old lattice windows remain, and happily have not

The Cottage Garden

been supplanted by modern sash or square panes of glass, which are not nearly so picturesque. You will notice also the tiles used for the covering of the porch and their fish-scale shape.

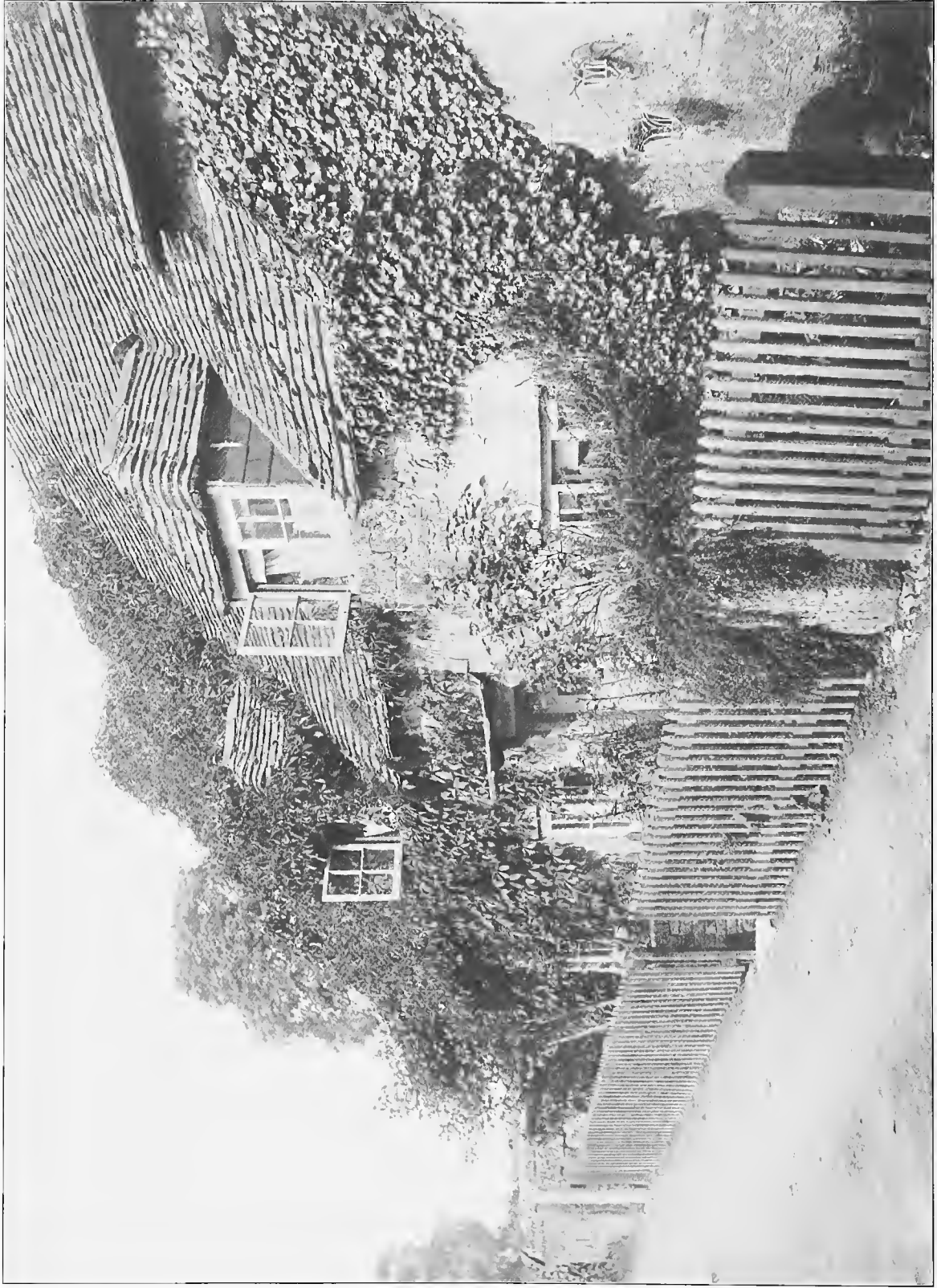
The gardens in the Isle of Wight are especially rich in luxuriant growth and the wealth of sweet flowers. Part of the garden of the Post Office at Shalfleet has already been described. The whole village is most picturesque, lying in a hollow in the western part of the island. The merciless hand of the "restorer" has as yet spared its beauties. We give a view of the pretty garden path with its trees and flowers, an ideal border. Adjoining this picturesque post office is another cottage equally beautiful, with its mantle of ivy and Virginia creeper, its dormer windows and tiled roof whereon the lichen clings and produces a rich coloring.

Our villagers are very expert gardeners. They know not the Latin names of plants; they have their own names for shrubs and flowers, which you will not find in the

botanical books, but are formed on some whimsical idea, some errant fancy born of rustic imagination or quaint conceit, and are often very appropriate and true. Lecturers sometimes come to teach us how to dig our gardens, what potatoes to plant, what fertilizers to use, the kind and nature of the soil which it is our privilege to cultivate. But our rustics like not lecturers. We think we know from experience quite as much as the lecturer can tell us; so we refuse to "sit under" his eloquent discourses, and prefer to pursue our own ignorant and perhaps mistaken ways. Here is a description of a Berkshire village garden told by one who knows her county well and the quaint ways of her rural neighbors. She tells of the glories of "the Red House which gained its title in its youth. A century of wear and weather has toned the bricks until they look almost colorless by contrast with the rich, crimson flowers of the *Pyrus Japonica* that is trained beneath the lower windows. The upper portion of the walls is covered by a



A FRONT GARDEN NEAR DORKING



AN OLD COTTAGE AT SHALFLEET

The Cottage Garden

vine, among the yellowing leaves of which hang, during autumn, tight bunches of small purple grapes that supply the wherewithal for grape wine. At one side of the narrow railed-in space separating the front door from the street, stands an old pear tree, loaded every season with fruit which, owing to its 'iron' quality, escapes the hands of boy-marauders. The little spot reflects all the tints of the rainbow, save in the depth of winter. The first buds to pierce the brown earth and brighten its dull surface, are such tender blossoms as the snowdrop, hepatica and winter aconite. To them succeed crocuses, hyacinths, tulips, the scale of color mounting ever higher as the season advances, until it culminates in a blaze of scarlet, blue, and yellow, that to be fully appreciated should flame against gray, venerable walls or light up the dark sweep of some cedar-studded lawn. The square garden behind the house slopes to the brook near the bridge, and is shut in on two sides by high mud walls half hidden beneath manes of ivy. Along the stream—bordered just there by willows—is a broad band of turf flanked by nut bushes that shelter each a rustic seat, and sparkling in spring with clumps of daffodils tossing their heads in sprightly dance. When the sun is shining through their golden petals and burnishing

the surface of the water, when it is brightening the pink willow-buds and revealing unsuspected tints in the mossy trunks of the apple-trees beyond the brook, that little strip of grass is a joy, the remembrance of which abides throughout the year, until the changing months make it once again something more than a memory."¹

Not only for ornament are some plants and herbs cultivated. Our villagers are learned in the lore of the herbalist. An old pensioner in my parish who was wounded in the Indian Mutiny and bore bravely the effects of the wounds until his dying day, used to collect sundry herbs and simples and wondrously relieve the pain. It was in winter that he suffered most, when the herbs refused to grow. "Floures of Lavender do cure the beating of the harte," an old receipt book tells us. "They are very pleasing and delightful to the brain, which is much refreshed by their sweetness. Good housewives always have lavender not only for nosegays and posies, but for linen and apparel." Many are the quaint remedies which the herb-garden supplies, relics of gypsy lore, and not without their efficacy if received and served with faith.

¹ This garden is in the village of West Hendred, Berks, and is described by Miss Hayden in her book "Travels through our Village."



Old Cottage at Bledlow, Bucks



A ROADSIDE GARDEN AT WHITE PARRISH, WILTSHIRE

CHAPTER V.

FLOWERS OF THE GARDENS

MANY English cottages can boast of their rose-gardens. In fact roses are the chief glory of the gardens, whether they be large or small. Even the stern old Abbot of Reading in the fifteenth century, Abbot Thorne, loved his roses, and took for his badge, blazoned on a window in his summer residence at Pangbourne, an "Eagle perched on a thorn bush" with the legend :

*"Sæpe creat pulchras
Aspera spina rosas,"*

which a poetical friend has translated :

*"Roses fair are often born
On the rough and rugged Thorne."*

Our cottagers echo the sentiments of all the poets from classical times downwards, when they sing the praises of their roses. They

are often puzzled by the foreign names assigned to the flowers, and strangely transform and Anglicize them. Just as our sailors call the "Bellerophon" the Billy Ruffian and the "Nautilus" the Naughty Lass ; so we villagers twist the Gloire de Dijon into "Glory to thee John," and the rose named after the great rose-grower, Dean Reynolds Hole, is called "Reynard's Hole." General Jacqueminot becomes, in popular nomenclature, "General Jack-me-not," and the bright crimson Géant des Batailles becomes "Gent of Battles." But the roses bloom no less beautifully on account of this murdering of their names, just as the famous race-horse ran no less well because the public changed his name from the Oneida Chief to the "One-eyed Thief."



A GARDEN WITH A SUN-DIAL

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



A SHADED PATH

A fine example of cottage rose-gardens is seen at Wescott, near Dorking. Grass paths intersect at the center, where there is an old sun-dial which might appropriately bear the motto :

“ Amydst ye flowres
I tell ye houres.
Tyme wanes awaye
As fflowres decaye.
Beyond ye tombe
Ffresch fflowrets bloome.
Soe man shall ryse
Above ye skyes.”

A beautiful garden path edged with box and overshadowed by trees with grateful shade leads from the home of the roses to the cottage.

Another small and delightful rose-garden exists at the Battle Union Workhouse, near the spot where William the Conqueror fought the English. The eyes of the old people whose lot it is to find their way to the Union when the battle of life is nearly over, must



THE ROSE GARDEN OF THE BATTLE UNION

Flowers of the Gardens

be gladdened by the sight of the flowers, which remind them of the blossoms in their old cottage homes.

The old favorite roses which you find in these gardens are the Sweet Briar, the Cabbage, the York and Lancaster, the Moss, the old White Damask, the double white, brother of the pretty pink Maiden's Blush. But some cottagers are more ambitious, and obtain cuttings of many varieties of modern rose-trees, and hybrids and teas now flourish in the peasant's border as in the lord's rosarium. The love of this flower is indeed the "one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin."

Cottage gardens preserve the tradition of the outdoor culture of the vine which in old days flourished throughout England. Not a few of the monasteries had their vineyards. At Abingdon there is a street called the Vineyard, which preserves the memory of the site where the monks of that famous



A VINE-CLAD GATEWAY



A VINE-BEDECKED COTTAGE AT FRESHWATER



AN ARCHED ENTRANCE OF HEDGE

Flowers of the Gardens

abbey once grew their grapes. We have already noticed the vines that are trained around the porch of a cottage home. In the outskirts of Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, facing the road, is a house covered with a gigantic vine, which gives it a very picturesque appearance. The grapes grown on these vines are seldom eatable. In some summers, when there is an abundance of sunshine, they are not very sour, but usually they are not delectable. A good tart can be made of them, and the villagers manufacture a species of grape-wine which vies with the decoctions brewed by industrious housewives. There



A COTTAGE ENTRANCE AT NORTON

is a great variety of these beverages prepared from recipes which have been handed down from the days of our grandmothers. Rhubarb wine, which is said to equal champagne, when properly prepared; cowslip wine, a somewhat sad liquid; black currant wine; elderflower wine; are some of the contents of the countryman's cellar. We give another view of a vine-clad house.

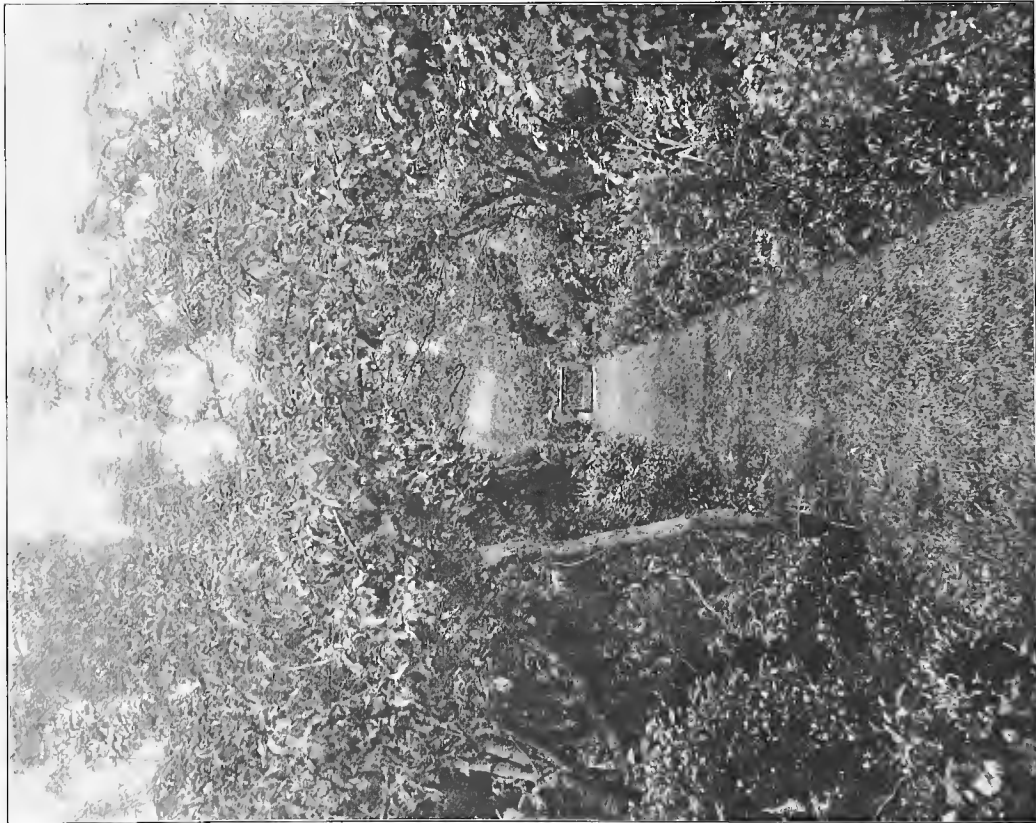
Examples of the formal garden may be seen as we walk along the English roads. Box-trees, cut into fantastic shapes, and clipped yews are occasionally met with. The trees are made to assume the appearance of peacocks with long,



IN A GARDEN AT WESCOTT



AT YARMOUTH



GARDEN WALKS IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT

AT SHIDE

Flowers of the Gardens

flowing tails, or other strange shapes, awkward figures of men and animals which called forth the scourge of the writer in "The Guardian" nearly two hundred years ago. He tells of a citizen who is no sooner proprietor of a couple of yews than he entertains thoughts of creating them into giants like those of Guildhall, of an eminent cook who beautified his country lawn with a coronation dinner in greens, where you see the champion flourishing on horseback at one

which has a good effect. In the same village there is a charmingly picturesque house, a thatched cottage, very trim and neat, and in the garden the lilies, pinks and iris love to dwell.

Nothing is more beautiful in some of these gardens than the vistas and long paths which are occasionally found therein. Nigh Newport, in the Isle of Wight, is the village of Shide, wherein there is a cottage-garden which possesses this charming feature.



WESTOVER LODGE NEAR CALBORNE

end of the table, and the queen in perpetual youth at the other. Happily the fashion of clipping and hacking trees is not universally followed, and except in some districts, is rare in cottage gardens. In the accompanying view the outside hedge is trained and clipped so as to form a capacious porch, and the holly has been cut in the form of ascending globes. Clipped box-trees stand as guards on each side of the cottage door at Norton, in the Isle of Wight, which is overhung with vines, and the garden is raised about two feet higher than the path,

There is a long turf walk carefully mown. The coloring of the flowers that deck the sides is extremely brilliant, the bright red of the poppy predominating.

Another charming walk leads to a cottage at Yarmouth, also in the Isle of Wight. This path is also green with fine-cut turf. On each side pinks and roses bloom, and when you reach the end of the path you come to a wall overlooking the sea that girts our shores. There is a lovely garden path at the village of Wescott, near Dorking, in Surrey, which our artist has reproduced

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



A COTTAGE AT NORTON

with charming effect. There is a wealth of fair flowers on each side, and at the end come stone steps leading to a terrace, which probably was formerly attached to a more important habitation.

Our great landowners have often expended much thought and care upon the gate-houses at the entrances to their parks. Some of their efforts can scarcely be considered successful, and follow the lines of the debased style of Gothic architecture or are imperfect copies of the Italian style of Palladio with its pseudo-classicism and elaborate pretentiousness. Such cottages seem out of place in an English landscape; they fail to harmonize with our scenery, and contrast indifferently with the native style of the English rural home of which we possess so many beautiful and picturesque examples. Far better is it to follow our traditional mode of building, and to have at the entrance of our parks some such fair old English cottage as that shown in the accompanying view of Westover Lodge, near Calborne, in the Isle of Wight, with its thatched roof gracefully curved at the eaves, its lattice windows and its walls mantled with ivy and girt by the luxuriant foliage of trees. Such a cottage fits in well with its surroundings and does not obtrude itself or look out of place.

Besides the beauties of our cottage gardens, they have their uses. The rural exodus is one of the most alarming features of our social and industrial life. Peasants

leave the villages destitute and flock to our large towns, believing that London and other great centers are paved with gold. They soon discover their mistake, and the loss of the garden with its crops of vegetables, enough to feed the family throughout the year, is one of the first steps in their rude awakening. The garden, too, is their medicine chest which affords cures for all kinds of simple maladies, especially when they are used in faith. It affords much happiness to him who cultivates it, and tells of the joy and cheerfulness

of life, and makes for the blessedness of sweet content.

Trees and flowers, also, have their folk and fairy lore, and can work wonders for those who believe in their powers. The ash and the maple are wonder-working trees. They will give long life to children who are passed through their branches or through a hole cut in a youthful trunk. More than a hundred years ago maidens scattered hempseed in order to discover their future husbands, repeating the words:

“Hempseed I sow, hempseed I sow,
And he that is my true love come after me and mow.”

The stems of the bracken when cut disclose the initials of a lover, and the dandelion when its seeds are ripe will tell, when blown upon, how many years will elapse before the happy event will take place. Should a cow break into the garden, a death will shortly occur in the family. Plants foretell death with extraordinary exactitude. The yellow broom or a branch of yew brings death when brought into a house, and an apple-tree blooming twice in the year presages a decease.

The ash-tree can work wonders. If you have a wart you must prick it with a pin, and then stick it into the bark of the tree and repeat the rhyme:

“Ashen-tree, ashen-tree,
Pray buy these warts of me.”

Cowslips will cure paralysis, and are sometimes called in the country “palsyworts.”

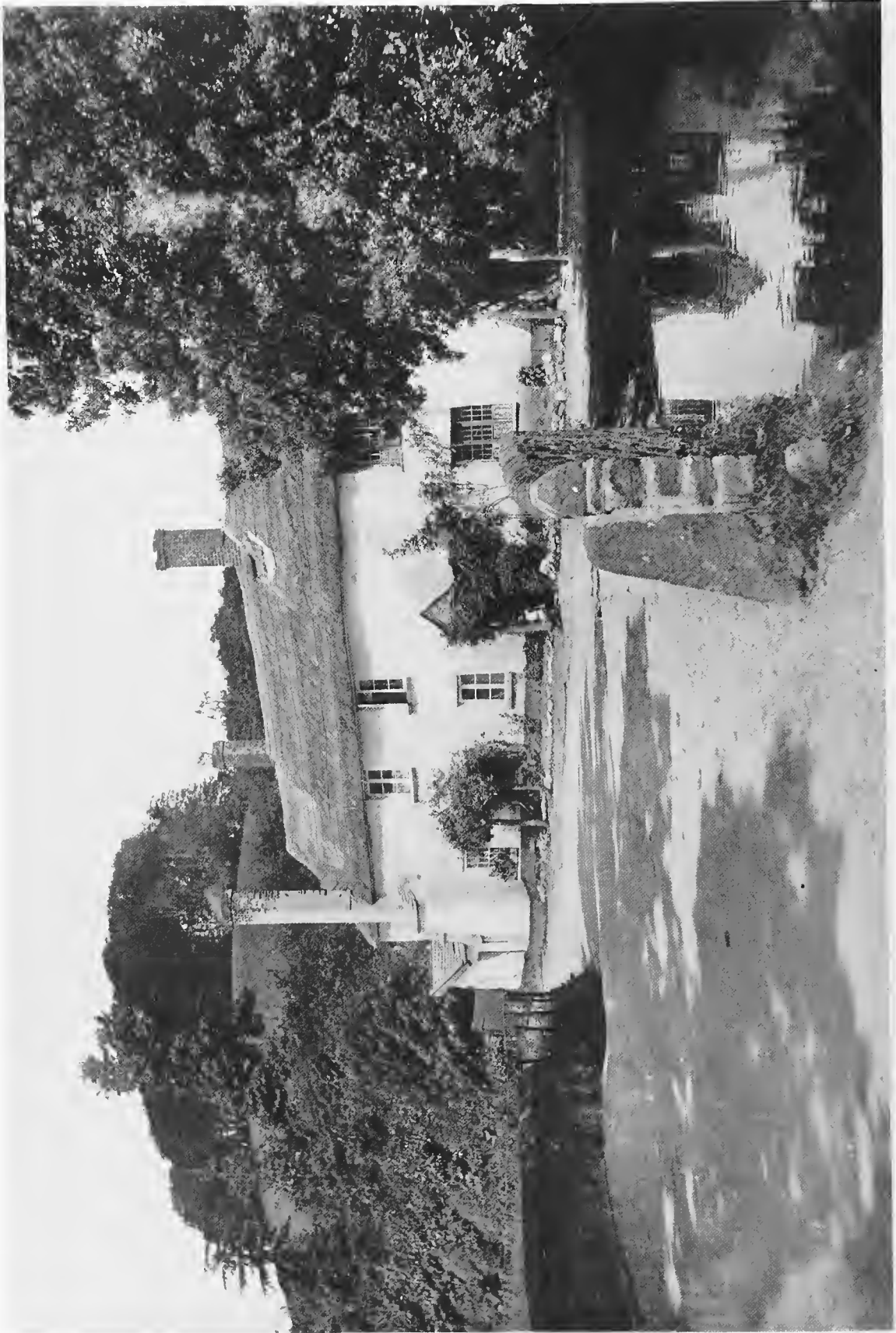
Flowers of the Gardens

They are therefore in accord with old medical writers who term these lovely flowers *Herba paralysis*. Some of the country-folk think far more of these old-fashioned remedies than we do of all the doctors' medicines. They still love to hang old horse-shoes out-

side the cottage door, in order to keep out witches, and bring good luck, but you must be careful to hang the horse-shoe with the toe downwards and heel upwards if you would secure good fortune for your house and home.



Old Cottage at Burham



ON THE DAWLISH ROAD, NEAR EXETER



Old Cottage near Nutfield, Surrey

CHAPTER VI.

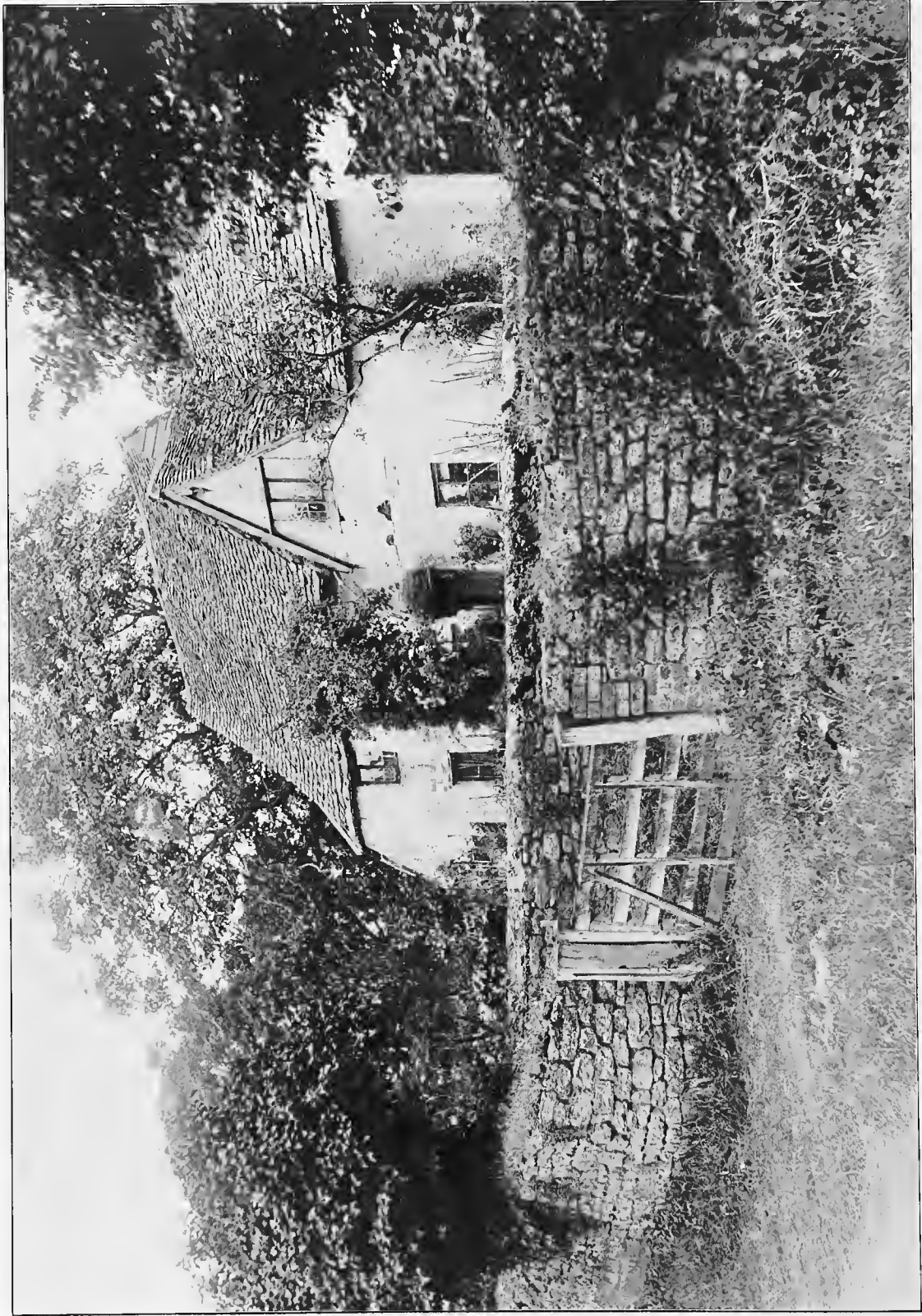
THE EVOLUTION OF THE COTTAGE

IT is interesting to note the process of the development of the English dwelling-house, its origin and evolution. The English are a home-loving race, and England is the land of homes. The natural affection with which the nation regard their homes is to a great extent peculiar to the race on both sides of the Atlantic. The Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Italian, do not have the same respect for home. The *villa* of Italy, the *château* of France, the *country-seat* of England, differ from each other in their arrangements, precisely as their occupiers differ in the habits of life; and whether the home be a mansion or a cottage, it is equally dear to those who dwell therein.

The story of the evolution of the cottage can scarcely be traced so far back as the prehistoric cave-dwellings, where, in paleolithic times, a rude race of feral nomads dwelt and fashioned their crude tools of flint and hunted the brown bear, the hyena, the hippopotamus and other strange creatures which England now knows not. The earliest and simplest notion for constructing a dwelling was that of digging holes in the ground and roofing them over with a light thatch. Hence

we have the pit dwellings of our distant forefathers, the neolithic folk, who made polished flint weapons, and were not an uncivilized race. At Hurstbourne, Hants, nine of these early habitations, rudely pitched with flint-stones, have been discovered. Some of these dwellings had passages leading into them. A few flints, together with wood ashes, showed the position of the hearths. The sloping entrance passages are peculiar, and are almost unique in England, though several have been met with in France. A rude ladder was the usual mode of entrance. These abodes had probably cone-shaped roofs made of rafters lashed together at the center, protected by an outside coat of peat, sods of turf or rushes. We can learn something of the nature of the abodes of the living by examining the chambers of the dead neolithic folk, as in most cases the latter were a copy of the former. The Waddon Chambers, Kit's Coty House, near Aylesford; Wayland Smith's Cave, Berkshire, and hundreds of other examples of sepulchral monuments show the resemblance of the earthly house with the grave.

Another form of early cottage was the



AN OLD HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SEEND

The Evolution of the Cottage

pile-dwelling, constructed on piles in lakes or rivers, in order to secure the inhabitants from the sudden attack of their enemies or the ravages of beasts of prey. Switzerland is famous for its lake dwellings, and the settlements at Morges, on the Lake of Geneva; at Sütz, on the Lake of Biemme, and at Marin and Auvèrnièr, on the Lake of Neuchâtel, reveal extraordinary evidences

of early pre-historic civilization. England, too, has its lake dwellings, the most complete examples having been recently discovered at Glastonbury. A platform was found constructed of timber and brushwood, supported by rows of small piles. The walls were

built of upright posts, the crevices being filled with wattle and daub; and the houses were usually circular in shape, though some were rectangular. The floor was made of clay. Communication with the land was effected by means of a canoe; cut out of the stem of an oak, with a pointed prow, which had a hole through which doubtless a rope was passed in order to fasten it to the little harbor of the lake village. The life of the village extended from about 300 B. C. to the advent of the Romans.

When the Celtic folk abandoned their pit-dwellings they still retained the circular form in the construction of their abodes. At the time of the Roman invasion, Cæsar tells us that their houses resembled those in Gaul. Diodorus Siculus calls them wretched cottages, constructed of wood and covered with straw; and Strabo describes those of Gaul as being constructed of poles and wattled work, in the form of a circle, with lofty, tapering or pointed roofs. The Antonine Column gives

representations of the Gaulish houses which accord with the description of Strabo, except that the roofs are domed, and some of the houses are oblong; but the want of skill in the sculptor has made them appear more like large tin canisters than human habitations. The early races in Britain knew how to build with stone, and evidences of their work can be seen in Cornwall and in

the remote Caithness. At Chun Castle there are walls built of rough masses of granite, five or six feet long, fitted together and piled up without cement, but presenting a tolerably smooth surface, and my friend Sir Francis Tress Barry has been excavating some



WAYLAND SMITH'S CAVE

northern shore of Scotland, constructed of uncemented stone. These brocks, buried homes of a forgotten race, are very singular and curious buildings. There is a circular tower composed of a dry-built wall, fifteen feet thick, enclosing a court twenty feet in diameter. The wall rises to a height of forty-five feet, and has no opening to the outside except the doorway, which gives access to the court. Opening from the court are a series of chambers on the ground floor, constructed in the thickness of the wall and rudely vaulted with overlapping masonry. Above these are successive ranges of level galleries, also in the thickness of the wall, each going around the tower, and placed so that the roof of the one below always forms the floor of the one above. These galleries are crossed successively by a stair, from which access to them is obtained by facing around in the ascent and stepping across the vacant space forming the well of the stair. The lower three galleries only are lighted, and

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



REMAINS OF A ROMAN HOUSE AT SILCHESTER

the windows are placed in vertical ranges so close to each other as to be separated only by their upper and lower lintels.¹ The most famous of these prehistoric buildings is the brock on a small island called Mousa, in Shetland, which approaches very closely to that of the Martello towers which stud some parts of the southern shores, and were built when Napoleon threatened to conquer England. This Mousa brock is still thirty-seven feet high, and is referred to in the Orkney Saga as having been abandoned in about the year 900 A. D.

The tradition of the hemispherical neolithic hut was carried on in the Celtic beehive dwellings of Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Gaul; whilst the plan may be regarded as the prototype of the circular fortress, such as Chun Castle, the brocks of Scotland, and indeed much of the military architecture in England.

The bronze-age dwellings, on the other hand, whose forms have been preserved by hut-urns, display a tendency to squareness and angularity, which is chiefly due to the employment of timber in their construction. The influence of the use of metal was shown, even in that early age, in the form of the domestic dwelling. The possession of bronze tools made it possible to work timber into the requisite forms of beams and rafters,

¹ Professor Anderson's "Scotland in Pagan Times," p. 180.

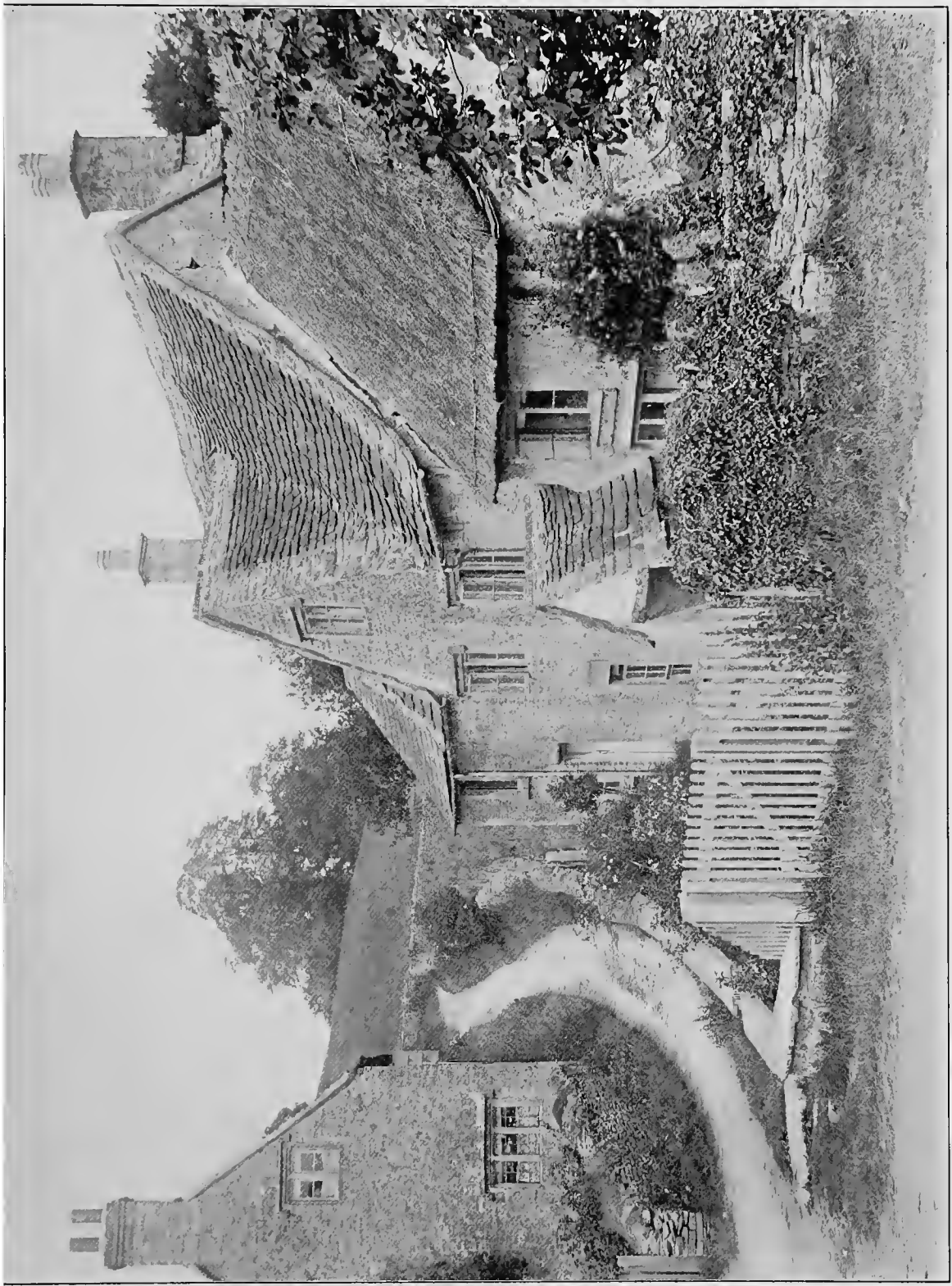
and flat walls and gabled roofs took the place of rounded walls constructed of interwoven branches and wickerwork of the earlier period. Our modern houses may be regarded as the direct descendants, with various modifications, improvements and developments, of the bronze-age hut.² The circular hut is therefore the oldest form of human habitation. There are still some of this type in Africa, and evidences of their existence are found in many lands. The hut of the charcoal burner in England is round, built after the neolithic fashion, and the circular plan has had a vast influence on the architecture of subsequent ages.

Our knowledge of Roman building has been enormously increased in recent years by the excavations carried on at Silchester, Hampshire, by the Society of Antiquaries. There we see the adaptation of the Roman ideas of domestic comfort to the needs of a northern climate. In Italy and the south of Europe light and heat are enemies to be guarded against; here, cold and damp. Hence the type of house in Roman Britain is totally different from that of the domestic buildings existing at the same period in more genial climates. There were two classes of houses built by the Romans. One consisted of a row of chambers with a corridor in

² Mr. George Clinch on Discoveries at Waddon, Surrey—Transactions of the Croydon Natural History Society.



ROMAN DWELLING NEAR WEST GATE OF SILCHESTER



A VIEW IN THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF FORD (NEAR BATH)

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

front of them; the other has a courtyard with two or three ranges of chambers set around three sides of it, while the fourth side is closed by a wall with an entrance gate leading from the street. All the larger houses have winter rooms heated by elaborately constructed hypocausts. The roofs were constructed of thatch, or tile, or stone. The stone roofing was cut in thin slabs, hexagonal in shape, lapping over each other, like fishes' scales. The tiles were large and flat, with a strongly raised edge on each side. They were nailed close together, and these raised edges were covered by semicircular tiles narrower at the upper end, but broaden-



A FARMHOUSE NEAR HERNE BAY, KENT

ing towards the bottom. Of the architectural details, the profusion of rich coloring, the magnificent mosaic pavements, the ingenious methods of warming the chambers, we cannot now tell. The Roman influence has had little effect on our smaller domestic buildings, though occasionally we find Roman bricks, the pillage of a Roman villa, or city, built up in the walls of cottages, as well as in great minsters, like St. Albans, or in churches like Brixworth.

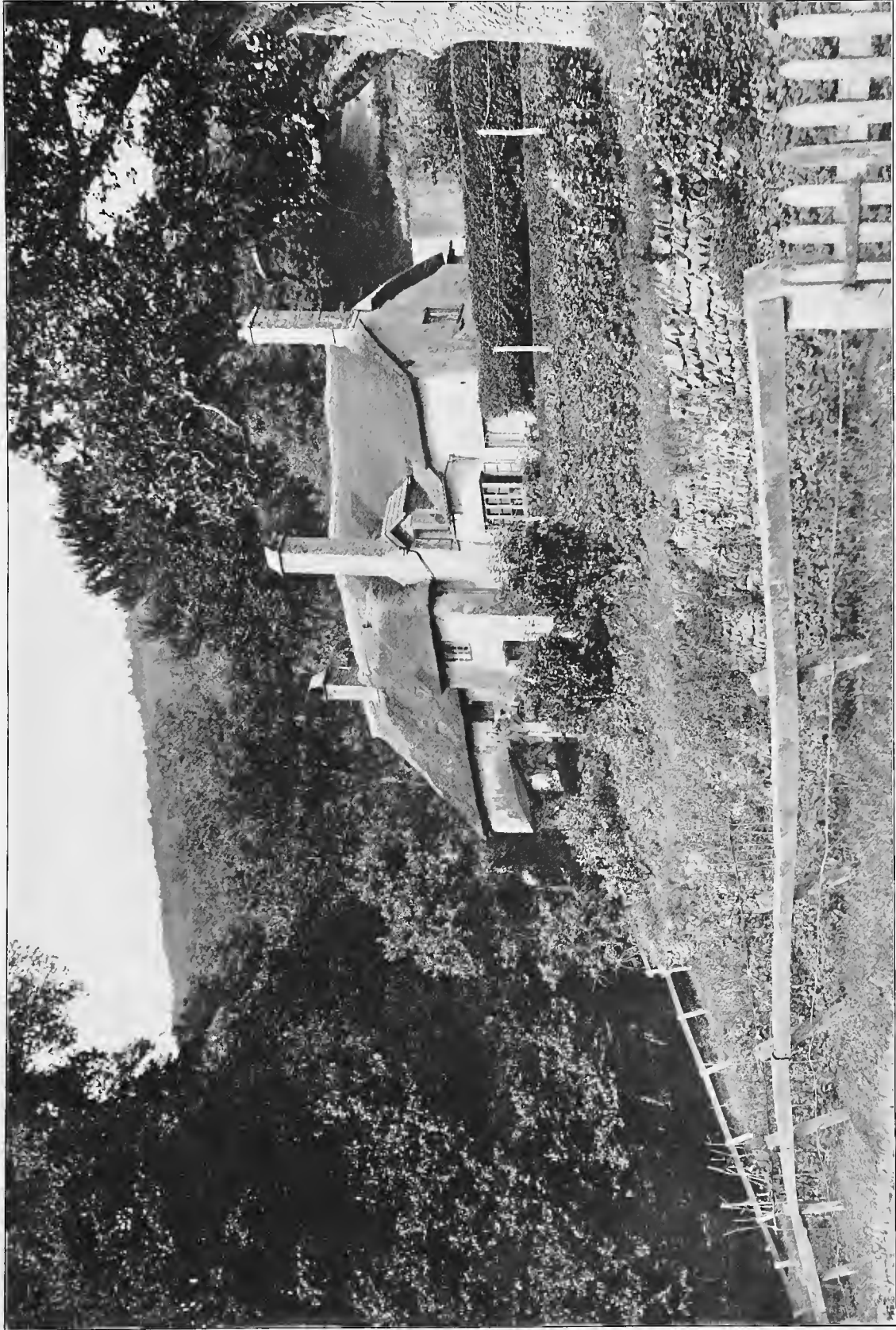
The germ of the Roman plan of a house was the *atrium* or court, an uncovered enclosure. It prevails in every form of Oriental plan, from the earliest times to the present day.

The Anglo-Saxon and the Dane brought

with them to England's shores their own ideas of building construction. The Gothic plan, coming from the cold North, differed essentially from the Roman. Their ideas were rude, and lacked the refinement of the Roman artificers. Their primary object was shelter from the elements. Their type was not an *atrium*, but a hall. The Saxon thane's house stood in the center of the village. It was not a very lordly structure. It was usually built of wood, which the neighboring forests supplied in plenty, and had stone or mud foundations. The house consisted of an irregular group of low buildings, almost all of one storey. In the center of the

group was the hall with doors opening into the court. On one side stood the kitchen; on the other the chapel. There was a tower for purposes of defense in case of an attack, and other rooms with lean-to roofs were joined to the hall; and stables and barns were scattered about outside the house. With the cattle and horses lived the grooms and herdsmen, while villeins and cottiers dwelt in the humble, low, shed-like buildings which clustered around the Saxon thane's dwelling-place. An illustration of such a house appears in an ancient illustration preserved in the Harleian MSS. No. 603.

The hall of the Saxons was the great common living-room for both men and women, who slept on the reed-strewn floor, the ladies' sleeping place being separated from the men's by the arras. Lord and lady, guest and serf, alike used the hall. The floor was made of earth; the door was woven of osiers, or made of boards, and there were small windows along the sides, closed by wicker shutters. A peat or log fire burned in the center of the hall, and the smoke clinging for a time to the blackened roof timbers and the stock of dried meats, escaped through openings in the gables, or a hole in the roof. This common hall remained the prominent feature of the English house throughout the whole of the medieval period, and though the advance of



A HOUSE NEAR PORLOCK, ON THE ROAD FROM MINEHEAD

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

civilization necessitated the addition of other chambers, a sleeping place for the lord and lady, the "with-drawing-room" (modernized to drawing-room), a chapel, kitchen, dormitory, etc., the hall maintained its pre-eminence even in the most complex plans.

Amongst the inhabitants of the early village community, the geburs and villeins, and the thows or surfs, we find, both in Domesday and pre-Domesday times, two classes of men who are styled *bordarii* or *cottiers*. These were the cottagers of ancient days, who had



THE HOUSE OF A SAXON THANE

small allotments of about five acres, kept no oxen, and were required to work for their lord some days in each week. The *bordarii* received their name from the Saxon word *bord*, signifying a cottage, and our word cottage is derived from the same root from which *cottier* springs. So in the dwellings of these folk we can see the earliest form of the actual cottage which we know today.

These primitive cottages were built at the side of the principal road of the village, near the stream. They were poor and dirty dwellings, usually constructed of timber-posts, wattled and plastered with clay or mud. Usually there was only one storey, but sometimes there was an upper storey of posts which was reached by a ladder. The furniture must have been coarse and rude, a bacon rack and agricultural tools being the most conspicuous objects. Such luxuries as windows or chimneys were unknown. The floor was the bare ground. Outside the door was the "mixin" or midden, a manure

and refuse heap. The fragrance of the country air and its sweet scents must have been somewhat modified by the unsavory smells.

In the region of stone quarries, cottages at an early period were built of stone. The art of brickmaking, used so extensively by the Romans, was forgotten in Saxon times, and was not rediscovered until some centuries later. The earliest existing brick building in England, with the exception of those constructed of Roman bricks, is sometimes stated to be the fine ruined Castle of Hurstmonceux, erected by Sir Roger De Fiennes, in 1440; but there is one older than this. Little Wenham Hall, Suffolk, built in the time of the third Henry, is, of course, older, and there is Little Coggeshall Chapel, Essex, which is a small brick building. It was not until the sixteenth century that brick building became general, and some of the best and most picturesque of our cottages date from that period.

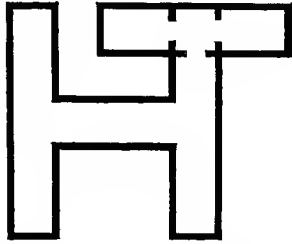
It is beyond our purpose to sketch the growth of domestic architecture and trace the evolution of the modern mansion from the Saxon hall. But there are many old farm-houses in England, once manor-houses, which retain, in spite of subsequent alterations, the distinguishing features of medieval architecture. The twelfth century saw a separate sleeping chamber for the lord and his lady. In the next century they dine in a room apart from their servants, an arrangement much satirized by "Piers Plowman" in Langland's verse:—

"Now hath each rich a rule
To eaten by themselves,
In a privy parlour
For poor man's sake,
Or in a chamber with a chimney:
And leave the chief hall
That was made for meals
Men to eaten in."

This process of development led to a multiplication of rooms and the diminution of the size of the great hall. The walls were raised, and an upper room was formed under the roof for sleeping accommodation. In smaller houses, during the fifteenth century, the hall disappears and corridors are introduced in order to give access to the various chambers. Some of these houses are built in the form of the letters E and H, which

The Evolution of the Cottage

fanciful architectural authorities interpret as the initials of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth. But the former plan is merely a development of the hall with wings at each end and a porch added, and the H is a double hall connected by a range of buildings. Sometimes, however, houses were built in the form of some initials. Witness the quaint conceit of Master John Thorpe, who adopted this plan:—



ONE OF JOHN THORPE'S HOUSE PLANS

and recorded his quaint conceit by the lines:

“These 2 letters I and T
Joined together as you see,
Is ment for a dwelling howse for mee,
John Thorpe.”

Thorpe's memory is too little regarded. He was the designer of Hatfield, Holland House, and many other noble mansions, and was probably the inventor of Elizabethan architecture. The Soane Museum contains a volume of his plans and designs.

The beautiful Tudor and Elizabethan manor-houses and palaces built at this time, when English domestic architecture reached the period of its highest perfection, are too grand and magnificent for us who are now considering humbler abodes. But the style of their construction is reflected in the farm-houses and cottages. We see in these the same beautiful gables and projecting upper storeys, the same lattice casements, irregular corners and recesses which present themselves everywhere, and add a strange beauty to the whole appearance. Such common features link together the cottage, farm and manor-house, just as the English character unites the various elements of our social existence and blends squire, farmer and peasant into one community with common feeling and interests and a mutual respect.



Old Houses near Oxford



BEWLEY COURT



AN OLD COTTAGE AT EYNSFORD, KENT

CHAPTER VII

STRANGE SURVIVALS—GEOLOGY AND VARIATIONS IN STYLE

ON the Yorkshire moors near Danby, you will find a curious form of primitive houses which resemble inverted ships. The roof is constructed of two "pairs of forks," or bent trees, the lower ends of which rest on the ground, while the higher ends meet in the ridge beam. The framework thus formed was strengthened and fastened together by tie-beams, and wind-braces. There are walls at the gable-ends, in one of which the door is placed. It is evident that the side walls were an afterthought, and entirely foreign to the idea of the construction of the building. At Scrivelsby, near Horncastle, there is a house of this description. The prevalence of this form of house near places, the names of which end in *by*, suggests the possibility that this boat-shaped house might be attributed to Danish influence. Thatch covers the sides as low as six feet from the ground. This is a very curious form of house. In the west of Ireland and Scotland there are similarly shaped dwellings built of stone, evidently of the boat-shaped type. The cottage, built of wood with forked roof, is mentioned in the old Welsh laws,¹ and is called a "summer-house." This was the kind of house built among the hills whither the shepherds took their flocks in summer to feed on the high pastures.

¹"Evolution of the English House," by S. O. Addey, p. 27.

Place-names ending in *set* or *seat* usually mark these summer abodes. The winter house was in the valley by the snug farm, whither the sheep were taken when the cold weather set in.

Many old houses contain the germ of the forked building though disguised by subsequent alterations. Walls were built of wattle and daub, or stone, from the foot of the forked beam, and from their summit roof-beams were stretched to meet the ridge, and tie-beams added to keep the framework together. It is curious that the idea of making the roof rest upon the walls of a house is comparatively modern among the Anglo-Saxon people, though the Romans set them the example, and used tie-beams and king-post.² Old mud cottages exist which have no forks. The foundation was constructed of mud mixed with straw, and then a layer of straw was laid, and the whole left to dry. Then another layer was built up and the process continued. Such walls are very hard and durable. The whole was roofed with thatch.

Gilbert White suggests that this method of building may have been suggested by the house-martin, which builds its nest of loam and bits of straw, and gives each half-inch time to dry and harden before it proceeds with the next.



A HOUSE AT SCRIVELSBY

²Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," i, 685.



A VILLAGE ROAD



THE KING'S ARMS, DORKING



CALLERUS ORATORY, DINGLE

Many old cottages and farmsteads are combined with barns and cattle-sheds. You enter them from the street of the village and have to bow your head, even although some of the yard-thick thatch has been cut away above the doorway. You then find yourself in a dark, unflagged passage. On your left is an enclosure, partitioned off from the passage by a boarded screen between four or five feet high, intended for a calves' pen. Farther on the same side is another enclosure used as a henhouse. On the other side of the passage is a door leading to the living-room, with floor of clay, and cubicles or sleeping-boxes arranged on two sides. This example of a cottage at Egton, Yorkshire,³ is very similar to many other English farmhouses, which combine under the same roof dwelling-house, barn and stables. The passage divides the living-room from the barn, and this was the threshing floor,⁴ or threshold. This arrangement has a Scandinavian origin. In Friesland and Saxony there are dwelling-houses and cow-sheds combined, and I have seen many such houses in Brittany and Normandy.

In old deeds and documents the word

³ 'Forty Years in a Moorland Parish,' by C. Atkinson, p. 19.

⁴ Addey's "Evolution of the English House," p. 60.

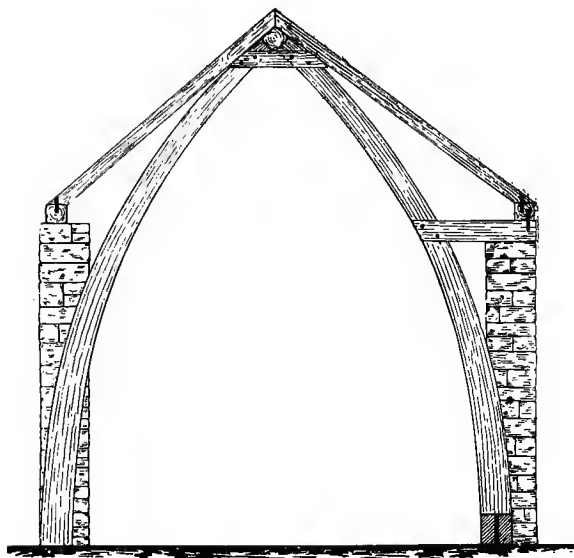
"housebote" frequently occurs. It refers to the customary right of tenants to cut down timber in the woods for the repair of their houses. I have before me a quit-claim granted by Geoffrey de Hurtle to the Priory of Hurtle relating to this right dated 1320, and as far back as the thirteenth century "housebote" was

freely exercised. These timber-houses, inhabited by the higher class of yeomen, were built or rather framed together, the spaces between the timbers being lathed and



TYPE OF MUD-AND-STRAW HOUSE

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens



CROSS-SECTION OF TYPICAL EARLY YORKSHIRE HOUSE

plastered. Sometimes the intervals between spaces were filled in with "mud-wall," a material composed of chalk or clay mingled with chopped straw. The floor was the bare earth, or it was sometimes pitched with flints. There were chimneys, and a few panes of glass in the windows. The bedrooms under the thatched roof were reached by means of a ladder or rude staircase. Sixty years ago houses of this description, relics of the past, existed in St. Mary Bourne, Hampshire.

The home of the farmer in the fifteenth century had neither chimney nor windows, the smoke escaping where the light came in, an uncomfortable arrangement which still exists in some of the poorer cabins of the peasantry in the Western Islands of Scotland. The wood fire burnt on a hearth of clay.

When the long winter evenings came round, the glowing embers of the fire alone gave light to the inhabitants of this cheerless dwelling. No candle's glimmering light was seen therein, as the fat required for making them was very costly, being four times the price of meat. Rushlights, which were made by drawing a dry rush several times through heated tallow, and then allowed to cool, were the only means of illumination. These when used were supported by a sort of tongs which enabled the holder, with safety to himself, to cast a few fickle gleams about the dark abode, and upon the faces of the farmer's family.

Ruder still was the house of the laborer. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, it cannot be denied that the houses of the peasants were hovels of poverty and filth. Villages were clusters of mud huts covered with reeds and straw. There was sometimes only a single apartment, and "Piers Plowman" tells of the dank smoke that came from the turf fire which could find no vent, but through the window holes and the chinks of the door, and "Plowman" complained that

"Smoke and smothre smyt in his eyes."

In Northumberland the roofs of the old cottages were made of "forks" which rested on



AN OLD HALF-TIMBERED HOUSE AT BRENCHLEY

the ground, and the walls of clay or rubble. Some houses had two rooms, one of which was occupied by the cow, and a rude partition called "brattish" rose to the eaves and separated this "shippon" from the only dwelling room of the family. The floor was of clay, or paved with large pebbles. There was no second storey, and the floors were often below the level of the ground, and very dirty. Just outside the doorway stood the "midden" or

Act was passed in the reign of Henry VII. (A. D. 1489) prohibiting the wholesale pulling down of farms and cottages, many of which must have disappeared, or the order would not have been necessary.

Before the dawn of the sixteenth century, many of the laborers lived in the farmhouses, eating and sleeping in the large halls which were the principal feature of the houses. In the sixteenth century there was a great de-



A ROW OF OLD STONE COTTAGES AT CASTLE COMBE

heap of refuse, and in rainy weather pestilential matter festered there and drained into the village brook and "dip-holes." No wonder that the Black Death and oft recurring plagues found congenial homes in such insanitary dwellings.

There was a great destruction of cottages in the fifteenth century, when many parts of the country were thrown into pasture, and the keeping of sheep and the trade in wool were more profitable than the growing of corn. An

mand for cottages. The abbey was pillaged of their lands, and the great landlords who obtained the fair acres of the monasteries, required men to till their estates. Hence there was a great increase in cottage building in the sixteenth century, and an immense majority of our old farmsteads and humbler dwellings date from this period.

Then were our English vales and hills dotted over with these fair edifices, the remains of which give a peculiar charm to



A COTTAGE DOORWAY NEAR SEEND

our scenery. There is no vain pretension about them. They are not like some modern villa which masquerades as a castle and calls itself "Huntingdon Towers," or "Castlethorpe," or "Dovecote Abbey." There is nothing of that about an old English cottage.

The style of building is traditional, handed down from father to son, and often peculiar to a district. And yet there is no monotony,

The builders made use of the materials which Nature afforded. Hence the style of cottage architecture peculiar to a district depended on its geology. We will try to discover the peculiarities of the geological formations which produce these divergent styles. First, there is a broad band of good oolite building stone, which extends from Somerset, running through Gloucestershire and Wilts, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Lincoln, to



AN OLD HOUSE AT BROADWAY

no dreary sameness. Each man infuses his own individuality into his work. If you walk down any village street, you will see that no cottage is exactly the same as its neighbor. They wrought well and worthily who thus could build. While not departing from the traditional style bequeathed to them by their forefathers, they thought out improvements here, or more picturesque effects there, using fertile resource that made the best of its opportunities, and so got the best results.

the dales of Yorkshire. Along its course can be seen many English architectural triumphs, fine church towers and spires, some of our grandest cathedrals, such as Salisbury, Wells, Lincoln and Southwell, and beautiful stone cottages, some examples of which we have already inspected.

East of this line is East Anglia, where there is no good building stone. Flint is found in abundance, and is used for walling, but mud cottages are very common. Brick is the



HOUSE NEAR WINCHESTER

principal substance of East Anglian buildings, and has been in use ever since the middle of the fifteenth century. It was not until a century later that brick came into general use in other parts of England. Houses were also constructed of timber, which was plentiful, but the timber domestic architecture is of a more simple nature than in many parts of England, and the woodwork is often concealed beneath plaster.

In the south-eastern district, timber is extensively used, oak being the favorite tree for house building. The plaster has a yellow hue, and the appearance of the houses differs from that of the black and white of Lancashire and Cheshire homesteads.

Some think that this yellow color is an improvement, but as a North-countryman I may be forgiven for preferring the Northern style. Some of the finest timber work in the country is found in the western English counties, which are famous for their half-timbered domestic architecture. Cheshire, Shropshire and Hereford possess a beautiful, soft, warm sandstone which has produced a peculiar style in church architecture, and houses built of this stone are very beautiful

and harmonize well with the surrounding scenery. In the region of Cumberland and Westmoreland we find little timber, and slate and granite very abundant. In that region

of lofty hills and crags and rugged fells the cottages are well built of stone, though their appearance is not so picturesque as that of southern homesteads. These lonely moorside dwellings look rather desolate, but within there is an air of old-fashioned comfort, with the cheeses piled up in the "rannel balk," i. e., the beam running across the kitchen, the old settle by the chimney-nook, the press and clock of black oak, the high-backed chairs, and plates and trenchers.

It will be gathered from the

above that there is endless variety in the style of English cottage architecture, which characteristic is one of its chief charms. The individual builder introduced variety in his use of the traditional style of his own district. The geological formation of particular neighborhoods, the materials which Nature provided, caused a vast difference in methods of construction and in the appearance of the cottage homes of England, which it is our delight to study.



A COTTAGE ENTRANCE AT BROADWAY



HOUSE AT SEVEN OAKS, KENT



Old Cottages at Ruscombe

CHAPTER VIII

FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN COTTAGE ARCHITECTURE

THE influence of foreign masons and artificers can clearly be traced in many of our cottage homes and humbler dwelling places. Cottages in our coast villages differ from those inland, and show the results of foreign intercourse and the exchange of ideas. Very potent has been that of the industrious Flemings who by their skill have frequently improved our trade and manufacture, and stamped upon our buildings the impress of their peculiar style. We should naturally expect to find evidences of their presence in East Anglia, Kent, Lincolnshire, where they had flourishing settlements. All around Boston there are fine brickwork buildings, fashioned after the model of those in the Low Countries. The builders, however, did not construct them in the Flemish fashion, and seem to have preferred the "English setting" to the "Dutch bond." You can almost imagine yourself in the Netherlands as you walk along the wharves and banks of the narrow Wytham, and see the old warehouses with their red-tiled roofs, like those in Rotterdam or Antwerp, and the picturesque gable lights. The stepped gables of many houses in East Anglia and the early use of brick show many evidences of Flemish influence in that interesting part of England. A row of cottages in the ancient town of Reading, Berks, is remarkable for its association with a com-

pany of Flemish weavers. On account of the iniquitous persecutions of the Duke of Alva, they fled from their country and came to England. Queen Elizabeth had compassion on them, and built for them this row of houses against the wall of the refectory of Reading's ancient abbey, which at the dissolution of the monasteries came into the possession of her father, King Henry VIII. The little houses, therefore, have much interest attaching to them, and did good service, not only in sheltering the poor weavers, but also in preserving for future generations one of the walls of the abbey which otherwise would probably have shared the fate of other portions of the monastic ruins.

Companies of Dutchmen, Flemings and Walloons fled from the fury of the Spanish soldiers and settled in East Anglia, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Rochdale and Saddleworth, Colchester, Kent, and the eastern shore of Scotland. Flemish influence is strong in the Isle of Thanet. The village of Minster has several houses with curious gables built of brick which clearly show foreign design. No part of the southeast corner of England retains so many examples of these graceful gables. The Thanet builders, influenced by foreign models, showed remarkable ingenuity and taste, and produced a great variety of design for such gables by



COTTAGE NEAR HORSEMONDEN



A HADLOW COTTAGE

means of trifling additions and small variations of details. One old house near Minster Vicarage has two such gables, bearing the initials R. K., 1693. The inn near the churchyard, called the "White Horse," also is adorned with the same sort of graceful gables. Such houses show Dutch feeling which is evident in Norfolk, but the brick and flint work here belongs to a different school from that which flourished in the East Anglian villages.

arch, and supporting the roof-tree. The roof is formed of branches and rough thatch. Aisles are formed by low walls of stakes and wattle, placed a little back from the columns or stems of the forks, and in these aisles are placed beds of rushes called *gwelys*, where the inmates sleep. A fire burns in an open hearth in the centre. The building was not unlike a small Gothic cathedral, if Medusa's head had been turned upon it and changed the timber into stone.



ON THE WAY TO SHERE

Danish and Scandinavian influence is seen even in a large number of English farmhouses which have the dwelling-house, the barn and cow-house under one roof, while the German and the Frisian farmsteads find their counterpart in our rural houses. Even that curious structure, the tribal house of the Celtic race, throws light on the evolution of our dwellings. This Welsh house was built of trees newly cut from the forest. Six well-grown trees were set up in pairs, their upper branches reaching over to each other, forming a Gothic

We English are a mixed race. Well sang the late Laureate:

"Angle and Norman and Dane are we,"

and in no way do we show better our mixed natural characteristics than in the growth and origin of our houses.

French influence is considerable in Scotland. The two countries were ever closely connected, both royally and politically. The English were not always loved across the Tweed, and the cunning Frenchman took



AT SHERE, SURREY



AT BRENCHLEY, KENT

care to cultivate the friendship of the brawny Scot, who was a "gude fighter" and useful in dealing with England. Hence we see flamboyant tracery instead of our English perpendicular in the windows of Melrose and other stately abbeys, and the style of the humbler domestic architecture assimilates more nearly to the *château* of France than to the manor-house or farmstead of rural England. I have before me the photograph of a cottage at Greville, in Normandy, in which

strange diversity in our rural habitations. Go down to the deep cleft of Polperro in Cornwall, which looks like a witches' cauldron as the wind flaws catch the eddying chimney reek from the grey cottages that cling to the valley sides, so that one can hardly distinguish living rock from built wall, save where the flashes of light gleam on whitewashed walls. It is a land of color, this rugged, beautiful Cornwall, where the tossing purples of the channel meet with the whiteness of



A SOUTH DEVON COTTAGE

the great peasant painter, Jean François Millet, was born. It might have been a Lowland cottage in Scotland, the resemblance is so striking.

In comparing styles of building, it is, perhaps, wise to remember that like circumstances and like materials may produce like results without any actual interchange of ideas or architectural intercourse or connection.

Nature and art combined have produced a

their white walls; flaming cactuses wind their coils within the window frames, and the fuchsia and tamarisks scarcely quiver in the breathlessness of the valley in summer time. The old post office at Tintagel, with its quaint gable and porches, is a good example of a Cornish house. Granite is the usual stone for building purposes. "The ancient manner of Cornish building," wrote Richard Carew in 1602, "was to plant their houses lowe, to lay the stones with mortar of lyme and sand,



A SURREY COTTAGE GARDEN

to make the walls thick, their windows arched and little." In the larger houses of the courtyard type, the lights of the windows

faced inwards to the court. This probably was for purposes of defence. Along the roadsides of South Devon we find many lovely cottages similar to those at Cockington, with their long sweep of thatched roof, and a wealth of luxuriant foliage in the garden.



A COTTAGE ENTRANCE, SHERE

The days are not so very far removed when literally every Englishman's house was his castle, and means of defence had to be provided. Roving bands of desperate outlaws were terrors of the past when most of our present buildings



A VILLAGE STREET, SHERE

were erected, and the dangers of civil war were scarcely contemplated. Cromwell's "Ironsides" and Prince Rupert's "Malignants" scoured the hills and vales of most of our counties and terribly did our farmers of Berkshire suffer on account of the forced requisitions, the cows and horses, hens and ducks, which the soldiers took and forgot to pay for. But our forefathers took care to surround their dwellings with moats, not so much as a defence against such exceptional attacks, as against ordinary vagrants and thieves. A

large number of the old farmhouses of Berks, Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Hants, have these moats. There are two in my



AT THE END OF THE VILLAGE, SHERE

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

little parish of Barkham, one of which has been drained, and the old farm pulled down a year ago; while the other surrounds two cottages formerly a farmhouse. It encircles the dwelling on three sides, and is picturesque with its overhanging trees and the reeds

and rushes growing therein, in which moorhens love to make their home.

The destruction of an old house is a grievous loss. Sometimes strange things come to light when the wrecker's hand is laid heavily on its walls and timbers. Hoards of old coins, dating back to the times of the Stuart monarchs sometimes come to light, and occasionally we find curious relics of bygone superstitions and primitive folklore. Beneath many a threshold of a Yorkshire farm, Canon Atkinson tells us, we should find a young calf buried there in order to ward off the evil of a cow "picking her cau'f," a propitiatory offering to the earth-spirits: or you will discover a bottle full of pins under the hearthstone in order to keep out witches. The proper ritual was to select nine new pins, nine new needles and nine new nails and put them into a clean bottle, which had to be se-



AT CASTLE COMBE

removed by the confession of her guilt, and the promise never to cast a spell upon the house again. If you would preserve your house from the effects of lightning, you should place the herb house-leek on the roof or chimney stack. It is a wonderful lightning conductor.

A relic of ancient customs may be seen in the flashings of mortar that connect the chimney with the roof. The bricklayers used to mark the flashing with a decoration made with the point of the trowel. This pattern is a reminiscence of the old wicker house constructed of twigs or pliant boughs woven between the posts. In the north of Yorkshire, Mr. Addey tells us, it is usual to wash bedroom walls with a drab color, and where they join the slanting roof to put waving lines of dark blue with spots of the same color in the folds. This is the same ornament used



A BERKSHIRE COTTAGE

by South-country bricklayers, and is an instance of interesting survival of ancient usage.

When we examine carefully the local peculiarities of the mason's or carpenter's work in a building, it is possible for us to find out its date and origin. An inexperienced eye can with ease read the story of many of our buildings, and note such peculiarities as the noble towers of Somerset, the soaring spire of Northamptonshire, the timber-roofs of East Anglia. The architect, who by trained experience knows the peculiar nature of the work of each district, can tell whence the masons came who constructed any particular building. Thus an examination of the peculiar characteristics of Wadham College, Oxford, shows that it

was built by a gang of Somerset workmen.

Many of the illustrations in this chapter are taken from the picturesque cottages in the village of Shere, Surrey. It is an important little place, and can boast of some antiquity. Many important families were connected with it, amongst whom were the Butlers, Earls of Ormond, the noble family of the Touchets, Lord Audley and the Brays. The

manor was divided by Richard Fitz Geoffrey in the time of Edward, among his sisters, and became known as Shere Vachery and Shere Eboracum. The latter was called after the

Latinized name of Richard, Duke of York. Audrey describes the old Rectory as "an extraordinary good Parsonage of old timber building encompassed about with a large and deep moat which is full of fish. The tradition runs that this house was built on wool-packs, in the same manner as Our Lady's Church at Salisbury; that is, it is like enough some tax might be laid on wool-packs towards the building of it." The village is a happy hunting ground for the searcher of old cottages, for the number of which Audrey accounts by telling us that there was a very



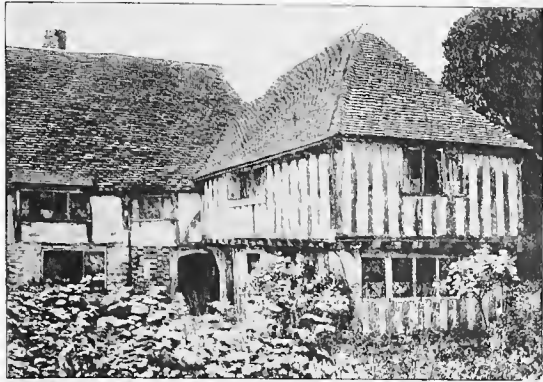
A SHERE WINDOW GARDEN

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ancient manufacture of fustian there. In one of the views, there is in the distance a cottage with barge-boards which have good tracery. Most of the houses are timber-framed with brick-work panelling. The lattice-windows still remain in many of them, and few villages can boast of a more pleasing variety of rural dwellings than this little village of Shere.



A GARDEN DOORWAY OF A HOUSE NEAR PORLOCK



Cottages at Merrow

CHAPTER IX,

WINDOWS AND FOLKLORE

WE have examined the exterior of our cottage, the walls, roof and chimney-stack. And now we will glance at the windows. In many old cottages and farmhouses in England you will see some windows blocked up. The illustration of the house at Seend shows such a bricked window. This was done on account of the tax on windows imposed in the seventh year of the reign of William III., which was not repealed until 1851, when the tax on inhabited houses was substituted for it. We have had many curious taxes to pay—a hearth tax, which is as old as the time of Domesday Book, wherein it is

called *fumage* or *fuage*, and by the vulgar “smoke farthings,” poll tax, window tax, and a law obliging us to be buried in woolen. It is strange to our notions that the light of heaven streaming through our windows should ever have been a source of royal revenue. Lord Bacon inveighed against the

large windows in some houses “so full of glass that one cannot tell where to become to be out of the sun or cold.” Such windows were formed by filling in several of the spaces between the timbers of a timber-built house with lights. They have a very pleasing and picturesque



A VILLAGE HOUSE AT SEEND

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

effect. The window tax diminished their number. An old house, Ockwells, in Berkshire, has a very interesting set of these windows which are glazed with heraldic glass, and Hardwick Hall is popularly described:

“Hardwick Hall,
More glass than wall.”

The square compartments formed by the upright and horizontal timbers of a cottage naturally formed a good framework for a

great store of glass, and the ruins of the villas of luxurious Romans reveal broken sheets of window glass which show traces of staining in brilliant colors. Aubrey tells us that “Glass windows, except in churches and gentlemen’s houses, were rare before the time of Henry VIII. In my own remembrance, before the Civil Wars, copy holders and poor people had none in Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and Salop: it is so still.”



HOUSE NEAR PORLOCK

window, and were so utilized. But the size of these squares was not large, and subsequently larger frames were inserted. Old houses have always very small windows. This is partly accounted for by the closeness of the timber framing, and also by the scarcity and cost of glass. Glass was extensively used in England in the time of the Romans. The excavations at Silchester have revealed

The old name “window” discloses this lack of glass; it is the eye, or opening, for the wind, and was originally constructed more for the admission of air than of light. Sometimes, horn was used in lieu of glass. There is an old account among the MSS. preserved at Loseley House, Surrey, of the time of Henry VIII., which has several items relating to horn for windows. Thus we read, “a

thousand of lantern horns for the windows of timber houses," and, again, "gilding the lead or lattice-work of the horn windows."

The lights of the windows of stone-built houses were separated by stone mullions, and in large windows there are transoms also, and a hood-moulding placed above them, as in the old building at Marple Hall. Great skill was exercised in the glazing, plain, small, lozenge-shaped leaded panes being the most common in the old-fashioned windows. The old timber houses of Lancashire and Cheshire often retain much of the original glazing. At Little Moreton Hall, in the latter county, there are no less than six different patterns of glazing in leaded lights. The cottages at Chilham, Kent, show good and picturesque examples of lozenge-shaped lattice-windows. Many houses have been shorn of their old lattice-windows, and have received instead of these, square or oblong panes, or the modern sash-window. The best of the old work has too often been destroyed.



WESCOTT

Owing to the long sweep of the old thatched roofs, the height of the side walls in the upper storeys was very small, and the upstairs windows were placed very low down, and sometimes the lower sill was level with the floor of the room. In order to light them better, the picturesque dormer windows were introduced which form a charming feature of these old buildings. The houses at Broadway, Worces-

tershire, would have no light in the upper storey were it not for these dormer windows. The cottages in the beautiful village of Castle Combe, near Chippenham, have graceful dormers. This village lies apart from the usual haunts of tourists in a charming and secluded valley. The stream rolls placidly along beneath the ancient bridge, as placidly as life seems to glide in this quiet old-world place. In the centre of the village still stands the market-cross beneath its sheltering roof of moss-grown tiles, a delightful picture of



A COTTAGE GARDEN



KENT COTTAGES

English rural scenery. In old cottages we often find so-called oriel windows in the upper storey, windows that jut out from the wall, supported by corbels or brackets. They have a very pretty effect, break the surface of the walls, and are altogether quaint and pleasing. Many of them have been destroyed, and ordinary lights, flush with the wall, substituted for them. The ordinary bay window as depicted in the Broadway cottage is usually an addition of much later date, but there are many old examples which swing out from the first floor or are carried up from the ground. The old glass may be detected by observing its dull green color, which is produced by the action of time and defies imitation.

The lead glazing is usually inserted into iron casements. Much skill and ingenuity is expended on the construction of the uprights and handles, which are often of very beautiful design.

Architects are sometimes very successful in imitating the old designs of cottages, and especially in regard to picturesque windows. I am enabled by the artist's skill to give examples of modern cottages at Merrow in the outskirts of Guildford, which certainly can

claim their title to picturesqueness. One is planned after the model of the half-timbered building with a projecting upper storey, oriel window and tiled roof; the other is weather-tiled, and the arrangement of the upper windows is not ungraceful.

In order to see good doorways, we must travel to the regions of good building stone, to the counties that lie along the great bed of oolite which extends from Somerset to Yorkshire. In these parts of England, we

find the tradition of Gothic architecture preserved in many of the doorways. The perpendicular arch is seen in the porch of many a small farmhouse or rural cottage, with moulded sides and overhanging hood-moulding. Frequently in Cheshire and Lancashire the lintel is formed of a large stone shaped in the form of a triangle with the angles cut flat. The stables at Marple Hall are a good example of this. The sides and edge of the lintel are moulded. A good stout door of solid oak shuts out intruders. The cottage door



LAYWELL, WILTS



CHILHAM

Picturesque English Cottages and Their Doorway Gardens

is usually open, and hospitably invites an entrance. Perhaps the habit arose of keeping the door open from the belief in the good fairies who were by no means to be kept out of the house. They would churn the butter and do many other pleasant little "odd jobs." Certainly, it was not an uncommon practice to leave a hole in the wall for the "piskies" or pixies to come in and out as they pleased.

Before you enter a house you must remember that the threshold is a very sacred spot.

with the Chinese we keep out witches and such beldames by hanging horseshoes, or burying bottles, nails or pins. When a bride comes to her new home, she must be lifted over the threshold, or ill luck will befall her.

In England, too, we have had other builders besides those of human form, strange goblin-builders who played strange pranks and mightily disconcerted those who were rearing houses and churches with ordinary bricks or stones and mortar. At Rochdale



UFFINGTON

It is not well to stumble at the threshold, as we have it on the authority of Shakespeare who knew his folklore:

"For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within."

In olden days it was protected. There was a sacrifice made when the threshold-stone was laid. Amongst many peoples it was customary to sacrifice a sheep, or a hen, or a cock, and bury it beneath the stone, in order to keep out evil spirits. In common

in the time of the Conqueror, piles of timber and huge stones were gathered in profusion by one Gamel, a Saxon thane, to build a chapel unto St. Chad nigh to the banks of the Roche. The foundations were laid, stakes driven in, and several courses of rubble-stone laid ready to receive the grouting or cement. In one night, the whole mass was conveyed, without the loss of a single stone, to the summit of a steep hill on the opposite bank. With much labor, the stones were

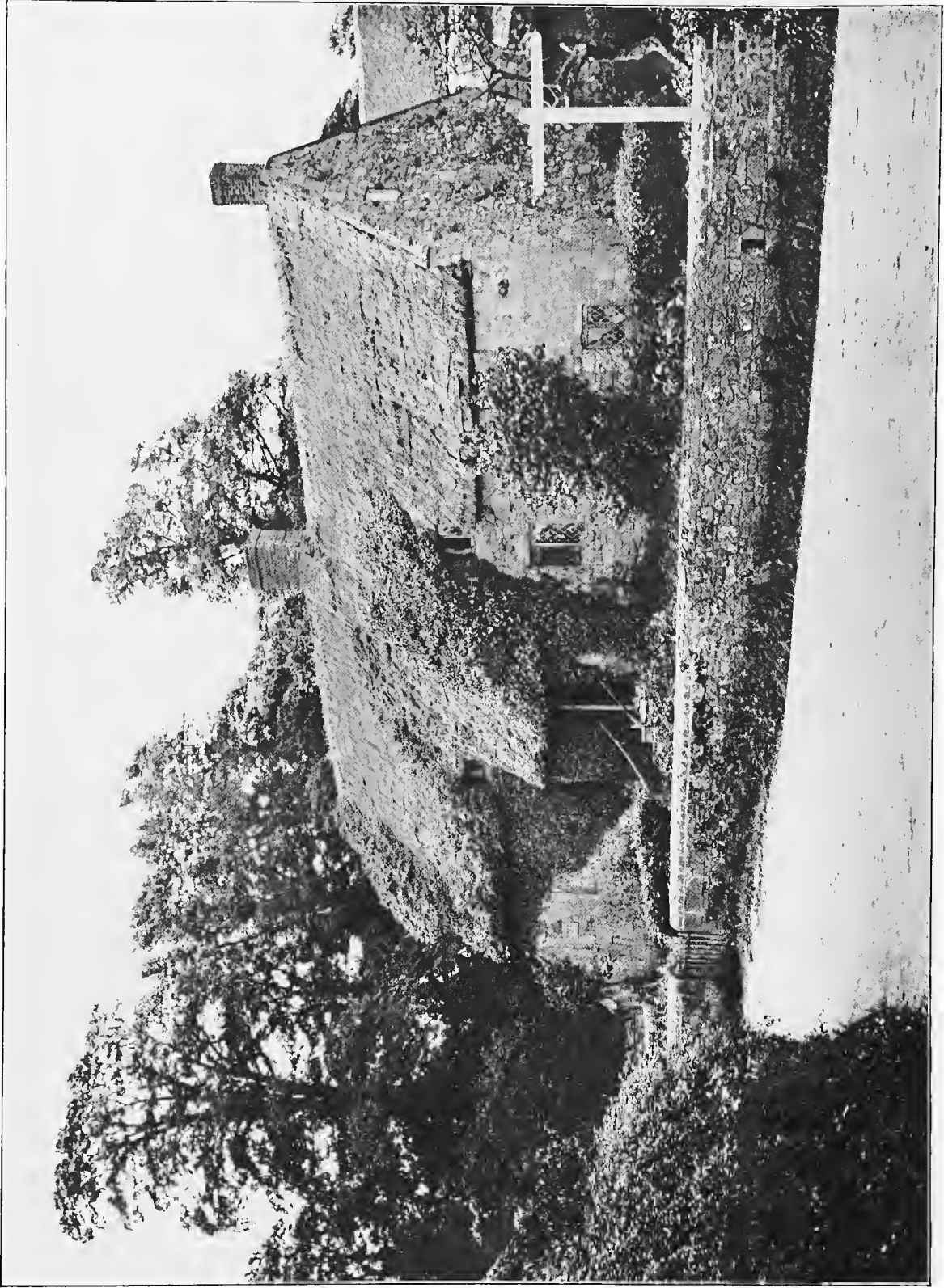


BROADWAY

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NEAR EAST PECKHAM, KENT



GODSHILL

brought back to their first position, but the goblin-builders again removed them to the top of the hill, and there they remain until this day; and you must climb one hundred and twenty-four steps if you would worship in that church. The goblin-builders were also busy at Wendover, Alfriston and other places; but we have ceased to believe in them now, and with the fairies, pixies and other like creatures they have left our shores.

The idea of a spirit haunting a house is

ale, and bread and cheese. This meal is called a *fooinin pint*, and is eaten as a kind of sacrifice to the spirit; otherwise, it is believed that neither happiness nor health will rest upon the house and its inhabitants.

The laying of ghosts was a troublesome business, and was not always very effective. A clergyman of my acquaintance, who has recently died, was once called upon to exorcise a spirit, and when he confessed his inability to perform the task, was told that



WRAXALL

very prevalent even in modern times. Every self-respecting old house has its ghost, some restless spirit that haunts its ancient home of love or wrong or crime, and will not rest. The idea of propitiating the spirit of sacrifice is very general. The ancient Picts used to bathe the foundation stones of a house with human blood, and at the present time, when the foundation stone of a house is being laid in Scotland, Mr. Lawrence Gomme tells us that the workmen are regaled with spirits or

“the ministers were none so gude as t’ ould Church priests for sic like work.” He should have imitated the example of a clever monk who expelled the ghost from old Clegg Hall in Lancashire. The ghost demanded a body and soul. None of the spectators offered to become the victim to the spirit’s malice. The monk, however, called for the body of a cock and the sole of an old shoe. Thus was the ghost laid. Many legends and stories cluster round our old houses,



COTTAGE AT SALISBURY



AN ENGLISH LANE, LANDBERRY, NEAR MAIDSTONE, KENT

and tell of curious superstitions which are only just passing away, of bygone romances, stories of love and murder, of smugglers and their ways, when every house had its secret hiding place, and every cart its false bottom for the concealment of the goods that paid no duty. Our inns have many stories to tell us of the old coaching days when the villages were alive with excitement, and kings and queens, noblemen and high-

waymen thronged the roads and slept in the quaint hostelries in old-fashioned four-posted beds between lavender-scented sheets. Very picturesque are those old inns in their decay. Silence reigns, and the grass grows green in the once busy stable yard. In our tour through the lanes and roads of England, we find many such inns, and perhaps we may be able to glance at a few of their picturesque features ere our wanderings end.



Houses Roofed with Stone



GABLES AT LEIGH HOUSE

CHAPTER X

SHOPS, INNS, AND HISTORIC COTTAGES

ONE of the most important houses in every village is the village shop, a wondrous place wherein you can buy anything from a boot-lace to a side of bacon. Sweets for children, needles and thread for the busy housewife, butter and cheese, tea and ginger beer—endless is the assortment of

goods which the village shop provides. Whiteley's in London and, I know not what, in New York can scarcely rival its marvelous productiveness. Very old and quaint is the building. There is one at Lingfield, in Surrey, which has performed its useful mission since the fifteenth century. It has a central recess with braces to support the roof-plate. Formerly there was an open shop-front with wooden shutters hinged at the bottom to the sills, on the tops of the stall-boards, and which could be turned down in the daytime at right angles with the front, and used for the display of wares.

In some cases there were two



XV. CENTURY SHOP—LINGFIELD, SURREY

into two halves like a modern stable door.

It is a very interesting shop—this one at Lingfield. You can see the corner and upright posts with their projecting brackets, and the ends of the girders and joists, standing out and supporting the upright quartered sides of the upper storey.

The spaces are filled with bricks placed "herring-bone" wise. When you enter the shop, you will notice the great diagonal beam with the joists framed into it, crossing each other at right angles.

Ruskin would have been delighted by the sight of this old shop. His advice is sound enough: "Watch an old



SUTTON BARN—BORDEN, KENT

Picturesque English Cottages and their Doorway Gardens



COTTAGES AT CALBORNE

building with anxious care; guard it as best you may, and at any cost from any influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would the jewels of a crown. Set watchers about it, as if at the gate of a besieged city; bind it together with iron when it loosens. Stay it with timber when it declines. Do not care about the unsightliness of the aid—better a crutch than a lost limb; and do this tenderly and reverently and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow.” Loving care has carefully guarded the Lingfield shop. It has a glass window now. Glass windows were introduced in the eighteenth century; until that time the fronts of village shops were very similar to that at Lingfield.

In singing the praise of old cottages, I must not forget that they are not always satisfactory as places of residence. Of course when a cottage is unhealthy and insanitary, something must be done to remedy it. The landlord usually pulls it down and builds a bran-new house. But the sentiment of the cottager clings to his old roof-tree. An old villager whose cottage was being restored was asked,

“When are you going back, John, to your house?”

“In about a month, so they tell me, sir,” he replied; and with a sigh and a shake of his head he added, “but it won’t be like going home.”

A little pains and money would insert drains and provide a good well, and save many a house from total destruction.

The other important village house is the inn—a hostel such as Izaak Walton loved to sketch, “an honest alehouse where we shall find a cleanly room, lavender in the windows and twenty ballads stuck about the wall,

where the linen looks white and smelt of lavender, and a hostess cleanly, handsome and civil.” On all the great roads you will find such inns; now bereft of their ancient glory; but still bearing the marks of their former greatness, beautiful in their decay. The red-tiled roof, the deep bay window, the swinging sign-board, the huge horse-trough, the pump and out-door settle form a picture which artists love to sketch; while within the old-fashioned fireplace, with seats on each side in the ingle-nook, and the blazing log fire in the dog-grate, are cheering sights to the weary traveler. We would linger here and revive the recollections of former days, see again the merry coach come in,



BALDON, OXON



ANOTHER VIEW OF CALBORNE

“The Lightning” or “The Mercury” or “The Regulator,” and take our supper with the motley throng of courtiers and conspirators, highwaymen, actors, soldiers and scribes; but we have said enough of the glories of the old inns, and must return to our humbler dwelling-places.

Modern architects are not very successful in building rows of cottages. In our great centres of industry, in Manchester, Birmingham or Leeds, you will see countless such rows, the same dread, dreary, uniform, colorless square blocks, with the same doors imported from Sweden, the same windows and knockers and chimneys and slates, and when you go inside you find the same wallpaper and chimney-pieces and the same rhubarb-colored oil-cloth in the passage. It is all so dull and dreary and monotonous. Contrast these sad rows with the achievements of the cottage-builders of former days. Here are some examples of their skill. Two of the illustrations show a row of cottages at Calborne in the Isle of Wight, in front of which flows a pretty stream. Here we see the ever-beautiful thatched roof with little

dormer windows nestling in the thatch, the lattice panes, and the creepers growing on the walls. There is nothing stiff or monotonous, but everything is sweet and pleasant to behold. And the other row of cottages at Broadway is very attractive, built of the good Worcestershire stone, with the pent-house roof covering the bow-windows and forming a pleasant porch for the doorways. Would it not be possible for our modern architect to imitate these old designs, and discard for ever those hideous erections of dreary rows of unsightly cottages with their even fenestration and monotonous sameness? It has been well said that Art is beauty; but it is also economy and appropriateness. Art is the faculty of being able with the greatest economy of material, of color and invention, to produce the brightest effects. If that be so, it can only be said that the builders of modern cottages have singularly failed in attaining to any perfection in art, and must yield the palm to the masons of former days. The most successful of the builders of the future will be those who are animated by the old spirit. The accompanying illustra-

Picturesque English Cottages and their Doorway Gardens



BROADWAY

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tions of modern cottages show that architects do sometimes obtain good results when they are not hampered by financial difficulties and parsimonious employers. The modern cottages at Baldon, Oxfordshire have this merit. This shire can boast of charming rural dwellings. An old cottage in the same village is attractive with its eager group of characteristic inhabitants. Great Tew has the credit of being the prettiest village in the shire. It lies among the steep well-timbered

hills in mid-Oxfordshire. All the cottages are built of a local stone which has turned to a grey yellow or rich ochre, and are either steeply thatched, or roofed with thinnish slabs of the same yellowish grey stone, about the size of slates and called by the vulgar "slats." The diamond-paned windows have often stone mullions with drip-stones over them; and over some of the doors are old stone cornices with spandrils. No one cottage repeats another. Nowhere do we find



GATE LODGE, NEWPORT



CORNER HOUSE AT LAYCOCK

slate or red brick. Honeysuckle, roses, clematis, ivy, japonica, beautify the cottage walls, in front of which are bright, well-kept flower gardens behind trim hedges. The old stocks still stand on the village green, as they stood when Lord Falkland rode from his home here to fight for King Charles and die at the Battle of Newbury.

The little village of South Hinksey, near the wondrous City of Oxford, has some pretty cottages built of stone. Some of them are whitewashed. In some parts of Berkshire, near Ashdown Park and elsewhere, we thatch the mud or cement walls of our gardens, and so preserve them from the effects of weather. They look very quaint with their overhanging covering of thatch.

England was once a land of monasteries, the beautiful ruins of which still remain and arouse the enthusiasm of all who visit these ancient shrines. They are sad relics of their former greatness. Many of them have been used as quarries for stone in time of careless regard for art

and historical associations. Hence, in many cottages and farm-buildings we find carved stones and much plunder brought from old monastic piles. At Laycock, Wilts, on the banks of the Avon, there was a nunnery, the ruins of which doubtless provided excellent building stone for the picturesque cottages which abound in the little town. We give a view of the farmhouse at St. Radegund's Abbey, near Dover, which is in truth a monastic refectory of the twelfth century; and the farmer's family work and sleep within the walls which once resounded with the tread of the monks and

the voice of the Reader when they sat in silence at the long tables during their meals. The good local stone of Wiltshire has enabled the builders of that district to erect many beautiful cottages and farmsteads. The village of Purton has a grand series of houses representing in well-nigh unbroken succession the various stages of domestic architectural development in England from the time of Queen Elizabeth to the present day. Potterne also is full of quaint cottages intermixed with modern buildings. We should like to dwell upon the beauties of the early



FARMHOUSE AT ST. RADEGUND'S ABBEY

Picturesque English Cottages and their Doorway Gardens

timber porch house; but it is too ambitious a study for our present purpose. The older portion dates as far back as the fifteenth century.

The substantial stone houses of Worcestershire resemble somewhat those in Wilts, and those at Broadway are very beautiful with the mullioned windows and dripstones, dormer windows and tiled roofs, a kaleidoscope of varied colors and venerable walls covered

seven feet. Indeed, the curate of a neighboring parish who was unfortunately a tall man could never raise himself to his full height when he was in his bedroom, and often bumped his head against the hard old beams. The introduction of gables and dormers greatly improved the bedrooms, as it enabled their height to be raised and more light given to the apartments. In spite of this, many of our old cottages are very de-



MODERN HOUSE AT LEIGH

with lichen. They are true examples of simple and beautiful architecture.

The interior of our cottages is often as quaint and interesting as the exterior. In many, the open fireplace with the ingle-nook remains, though it is fast disappearing. Much of the old furniture has gone to swell the collections of importunate coveters of antiquities. The rooms are low. Great beams and joists run along the ceiling and support the upper floor. The bedrooms are very low, often not more than six or

ficient in the sleeping-rooms. There are still far too many which have only two rooms wherein the laborer, his wife and family have to sleep and work and cook and fulfill the functions of human existence. Old and childless people are usually placed in such houses by careful landlords; but I know a man and his wife who have brought up a large family of children, who are respectable members of society, in a cottage with only two rooms of quite small dimensions. They love their home in spite of its smallness and

Shops, Inns, and Historic Cottages

quaintness; and often when a landlord has built a new room or a new cottage with additional accommodation, the new room is converted into a parlor, or best room, only to be opened on special occasions, or let to a lodger.

Our tour of inspection of the old cottages of England is drawing to a close, but I must not omit to mention the fact that many of these rural homes are historically famous. Great men, poets, painters, bishops, heroes of the sword and the pen, have been born or

tage is also nigh at hand, now converted into a mansion; in his time

“A little house with trees arou
And, like his master, very low.”

Antiquarians and naturalists will venerate Sutton Barn, Borden, Kent, the birthplace of the learned Dr. Plot (1641-1696), the keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford, historiographer of King James II., and author of the “Natural History of Oxfordshire.” The cottage is at least as old as the early part of the sixteenth century.



MARY ARDEN'S COTTAGE, WILMCOTE

lived in cottages, which become places of pilgrimage for lovers of history. Space forbids that I should mention in detail these shrines of hero-worshippers. There is Mary Arden's cottage at Wilmcote, where every lover of Shakespeare longs to go; the poet's birthplace whence soundeth forth the mightiest voice in modern literature, and the cottage of his bride, Anne Hathaway. Near where I am writing stands the cottage home of the distinguished authoress of “Our Village,” which attracts many votaries. Pope's cot-

A peculiar interest is attached to the cottage at Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, where Milton lived, “the pretty box,” whither he retired when the Great Plague was devastating London and filling the great charnel-pit nigh his house at Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, with ghastly loads. It is a typical Buckinghamshire cottage, gabled, oak-timbered and vine-clad. American admirers once entertained the idea of pulling it down and re-erecting it in the United States. Perhaps I may be forgiven for expressing my

Picturesque English Cottages and their Doorway Gardens

satisfaction that this scheme was not carried out. Englishmen can ill afford to spare the house where "Paradise Lost" was finished, and "Paradise Regained" conceived at the suggestion of the poet's friend, Thomas Ellwood, as they sat together on a bench in the little cottage garden while the birds sang their jocund songs and the beautiful country flowers shed their sweet scents around.

With this famous cottage we will conclude our tour of inspection of the rural homes of

which forces us to prefer our own rural dwelling-places, though emigrants from other lands have brought to us some styles or features which we could ill spare. We have noticed the traditional style of English buildings, the style inaugurated and developed in particular districts, and clung to with loyal attachment, though never slavishly adhered to. We have seen that the use of local materials, whether stone or brick or timber, tile or slate, is the true secret of the harmony



MILTON'S COTTAGE, CHALFONT ST. GILES

England, which the skill of our artist has so ably depicted. We have seen much that we cannot fail to admire, much that would serve for imitation. We have revelled in the sweet scents of the old-fashioned flowers, and remarked how beautifully these rural homesteads have become a real part of an English landscape, never obtruding upon it with crude colors or graceless forms. We have compared our own buildings with those of our Continental neighbors, and it is not patriotism alone

with nature which is one of the chief characteristics of our English cottages; and if we would succeed in the future in producing buildings worthy of their surroundings, we must adhere to the same principles, cultivate the same means, and imbue our minds with the same sense of harmony and reverence for antiquity which guided our forefathers in the erection of so many noble examples of the humbler sort of English domestic architecture.

